IronWatch

ANNUAL — YEAR ONE

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ABYSSAL TIDINGS

A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the first-ever Ironwatch Annual, celebrating our fist year of Ironwatch Magazine. This publication has been running solid for over four and a half years, thanks to the hardworking efforts of fans like you. Without your stories, your pictures, your feedback, and you spreading the word across the globe, we never would have had the success and visibility we do today. There's so much more room for us to grow from here, but for now I wanted to thank the Mantic fans out there who have helped make this magazine possible.

When the nucleus of this idea first began bouncing around, following the ending of the wonderful (if brief) official Mantic Journal, I worried that the interest might simply not be there, that when we finally opened ourselves up publicly and asked for the first wave of submissions, that we would get a trickle. The fear was also there that we would be ignored by Mantic themselves, or worse yet be asked to stop publication due to legal worries.

The days following our initial announcement changed all that.

We received far more articles and pieces than I had dared hope; our goal was initially for a magazine that was two, maybe three dozen pages long. Instead, we received enough material to cram nearly one hundred pages of content into our inaugural issue, and with nearly enough left over to write Issue 02 then and there. Furthermore, Mantic had the incredible good grace to not only give their blessing to the project, but to also allow us use of the images on their website and other digital sources for our first issue. This was a massively welcome gift, as we had not yet received the start of the surge of images from users that we would be able to use in future issues.

We also welcomed the first of a few regular posters and artists: Mark Smith helped provide initial title art, website background art, and Ironwatch covers, Boris Samec has established himself as our de-facto resident artist with his great covers as well as interior black-and-white sketch pieces, Michael Grey posted the first few of what would become a wide portfolio of amazing works focusing on expanding the fiction of the Warpath Universe, 'Orcsbain' provided a regular series of thoughts and discussions regarding the gaming hobby from a veteran perspective, and so many others who have shown themselves time and again to step up to the plate with fantastic content for our reader's consumption.

Feedback that first year was also excellent; I learned some valuable lessons in formatting, and proceeded from strength to strength in growing the magazine. Our first issue had hundreds of hits on it; today, according to Bitly, the various forms of the first magazine issue have been accessed over 1900 times! Overall, our site gets around that many views a month these days; our first half-year year we had just over 3600 views for August through December, and 2016 closed out with 23,300 hits for the entire year!

The first year closed out better than I could have imagined, and that was entirely thanks to readers like you. Your passion and support has helped buoy our fledgling publication, and I can only ask that you continue to help us move strongly into the future with the issues of this magazine in the years to come.

Speaking of the future of Ironwatch, I wanted to touch on the other aspect I put forth recently with no small amount of anxiety: Ironwatch Games, beginning with the Star-Struck City but now expanding to include Quarantine. These games realize another large aspect of what I hoped Ironwatch could become: a source, not only of stories, but of alternative and supplemental game systems and content, both in article form as well as standalone. Again, your feedback for these has been wonderfully positive, and I can't wait for both the release of the Quarantine Deluxe Rules, as well as future Ironwatch Games productions as well.

We've also got Ironwatch Tales in the pipeline next as well, for those of you craving your stories in an easy-to-read picture-free form. We're aiming to have that ebook available for your enjoyment sometime within the next few months, so there's bound to be some good reading to be had this summer from Ironwatch.

One last note is that we are always, always seeking to expand. If you have stories of your armies, pictures of your models and battles, scenarios and special rules you've enjoyed, or just want to leave us some feedback, please email us and let us know. Thanks, and Welcome to the Watch!

-Austin

Cover art by Mark Smith
Title art by Mark Peasley

Contact us and submit articles at:
ironwatchmagazine@gmail.com

If you find any errors, grammar mistakes, or rule imbalances, please contact us on the Mantic Forums (Look for the discussion labeled "Ironwatch Annual Year One Feedback") and let us know what we could do to improve your fan-produced magazine. If you are interested in writing, illustrating, or editing for our magazine, please let us know on the feedback discussion as well so you can get in on the action!

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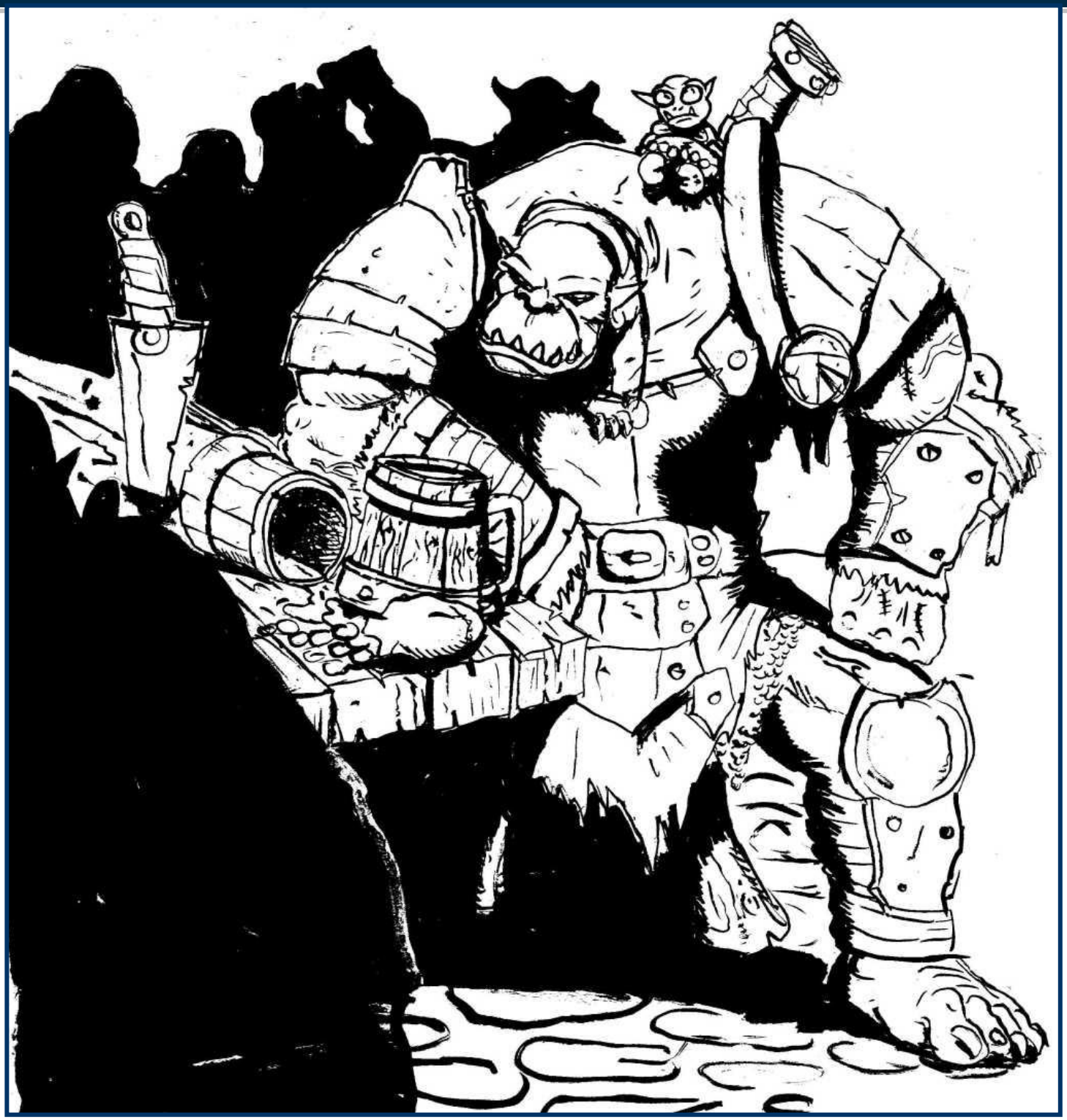
By Boris Samec



By Boris Samec

ARGUN'S LUCK

by Matt Gilbert

THE TWO DICE dropped from Argun's hand and rattle-bounced across the wooden table. One took an erratic deflection into the heavy tankard of grog that sat in front of the brown-skinned thug to his left before coming to a stop at the edge of the game board. The other skidded off onto the floor. The orc to

his left, Jarl, picked his teeth with the tip of a wicked looking dirk.

"Six" he noted, his single good eye staring at the die remaining on the table. "But the other doesn't count"

The third player at the table contemplated this and then slowly studied his hand of painted wooden sticks. "Yeah" he ventured, and then "does that mean the boss 'as another go?"

"It means I 'ave to roll that one again you idiot" snarled Argun. "Just like all the other times it's 'appened"

Argun took a swipe at the orcling perched on his left shoulder, causing it to flinch away and then scamper on to the floor to retrieve the

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"Ramming the die into the orcling's mouth, he held it by one leg and dunked it in the beer before pulling it out again."

errant die. It chattered as it skipped across the floor and then held the carved bone cube up out of the shadows with both hands for the players to see.

"Six again. So near yet so far" Jarl said. "Looks like your luck ran out this time Argun".

The orcling scrambled clumsily up the thick table leg, hampered by the load it was carrying. As it reached the top Argun snatched it away.

"Give that 'ere Spittle you little runt. Right, boys watch 'n' learn. My luck never runs out".

The die was dwarfed by the hand of the Krudger and with his other he grabbed Spittle by the head and held him dangling

over his own large mug of ale. “Just in case though” he said, grinning with yellowing teeth, “let’s get this die pissed so it forgets not to screw me around”. He squeezed the helpless orcling until its mouth popped open. Then ramming the die into the orcling’s mouth, he held it by one leg and dunked it in the beer before pulling it out again. “Right lads, watch this”. He punched the back of Spittle’s head with a wet thunk and the die popped out, landing with unerring accuracy in the middle of the board.

“Six”. Jarl threw his own hand of sticks down in disgust while Meathead, the other orc at the table looked up and said “so as ‘e won then?”.

“Course I won” said Argun, dropping Spittle to the floor. The orcling quickly scurried across the flagstones into the corner of the room out of reach. “I always bloody win”.

LIFE WAS GOOD for Argun. He’d always been one of the biggest orcs in a race of hulking brutes. His size gave him power too, both physically and psychologically. But he was good at what made an orc rise to the top; he knew how to fight and fight dirty. This and his wit had seen him rise to power quickly, the status of Krudger coming easily with many orcs willing to follow “Facesplitter” – a name he’d earned after altercations with a number of challengers to his authority. Piece-negotiations Argun called them. You talked. He left you in pieces.

Like most nomadic warbands, his boys had scoured the plains; raiding Dwarf mining camps and terrorizing human towns and villages. The horde had increased in size as smaller warbands were subsumed and soon larger settlements became viable and necessary targets. Argun’s reputation for fortune preceded him and was only enhanced by engagements like those at Harvon’s Pass and The Bickervale where they’d taken minimal casualties and routed larger and superior forces. At Yurdhaven Cross though, things had not gone so well.

The humans and elves had prepared well and the elven general managed to take Argun’s left flank by surprise. The resulting

Orc Warlord
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Goblin Rabble
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collapse had scattered the Krudger's warband, with only a regiment's worth following Argun into the Forest of Galahir. They had killed their pursuers but found themselves wandering aimlessly for many days. Argun violently suppressed any mention of ill luck, as was a Krudger's right, and drove the band deeper into the trees. Four days into the trek, his fortune changed. One evening, they'd accidently stumbled into a clearing occupied by a rag-tag band of human adventurers and chancers. Having set a poor watch and gotten themselves intoxicated on cheap wine, the humans were quickly overpowered and put to the sword – the fresh meat a welcome feast for the voracious greenskins. Argun kept one of the humans alive long enough to… entice the man to divulge the group's purpose.

The man-thing whimpered and cried and soiled himself more than once but eventually explained that the group were treasure hunters, following a map recently discovered in a library in Yolkston - two hundred leagues to the West. They were looking for an ancient hideout said to be in the forest nearby. Between the tears and screams Argun deduced that other troupes were also scouring the area for the hideout; the lure of what might lie within too great to resist the perils of the forest. The man had a copy of the map and knew they were close. On the morrow they were certain they would find it.

Sensing an opportunity for some sport for his demoralized band of grunts, Argun had them search the bodies. The map found, he had snapped the neck of the last survivor and tossed the body aside.

At daybreak, Argun roused the mob, kicking most onto wakefulness to angry snarls and grunts. With the map as a guide they discovered the humans were closer than they thought to their goal.

And now here they were.

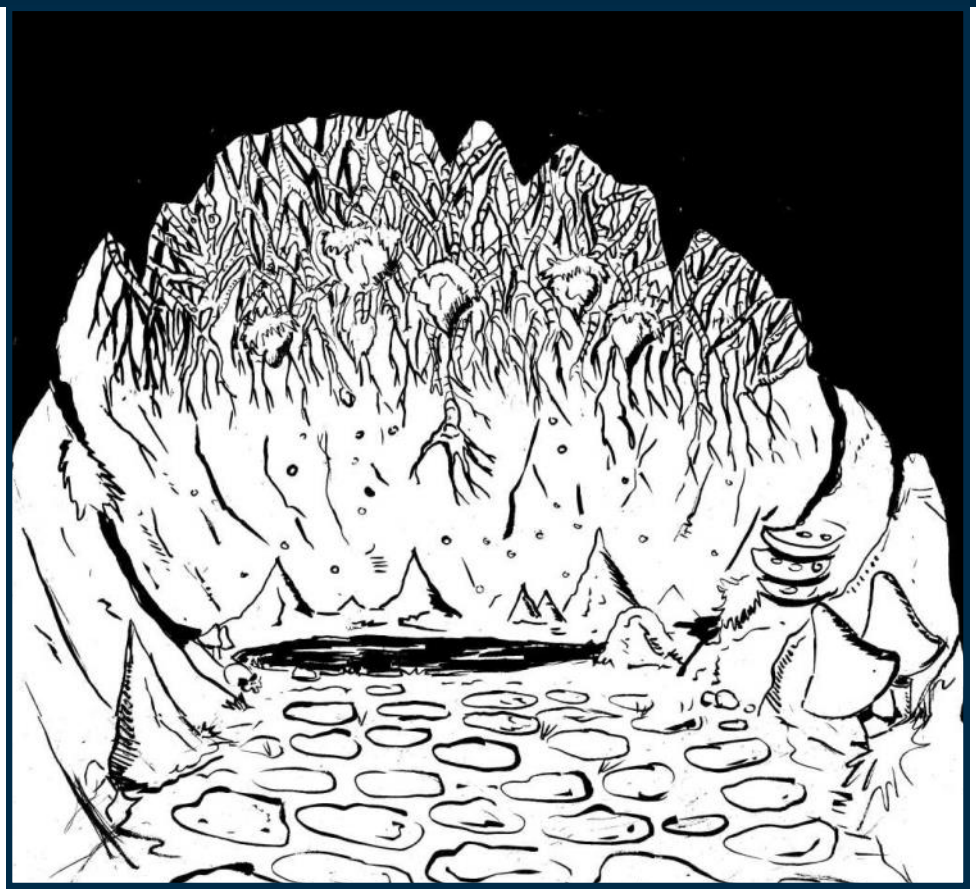
"Argun kept one of the humans alive long enough to… entice the man to divulge the group's purpose"

What Argun first saw as a minor set-back had become a new opportunity. Sure they'd lost a handful of volunteers to the various traps and surprises the place had to offer but over the last year they'd made a good living. The hunting in the area was good so food was plentiful and in the first few months at least four different groups of adventures had found the caves only to realize they were not unoccupied. The treasure haul from these unfortunates made the experience all the more fun.

Argun began to stoke things up, spreading rumors of the cave's treasures while at the

same time terrorizing the villages which lay within a week's radius of their new lair. A steady flow of opportunists and mercenaries hired to clean them out kept the boys in shape and the band's hoard of plunder increasing.

They themselves had found none of the rumored treasure of course. All that lay at the center of the tunnels was a large cavernous hollow, its vaulted ceiling hidden in deep shadow. From the narrow opening into the chamber, they could see huge tree roots like living stalactites dropping out of the gloom, tapering to thin, delicate fronds that eventually brushed a pool in the floor.



"They could see huge tree roots like living stalactites dropping out of the gloom, tapering to thin, delicate fronds that eventually brushed a pool in the floor."
By Boris Samec

The orcs avoided the place; it felt unnatural and repellent to them. The pool glowed with a cold, insipid light which cast eerie shadows. If anyone wandered too close, they suddenly found themselves back at the cavern entrance again with no recollection of how they got there. The voices would not stop whispering in their head for hours after.

Nearly a week ago, one of the goblins, Rikks, had thought it amusing to hurl night-soil in to the pool as a dare. Getting as close as he comfortably could he succeeded in hitting the target with some if not all his ammunition. Since then, the goblins had spent any time not out scouting entertaining themselves by playing "crap-splash".

"Boss?"

Argun leaned back against the cold wall. The place was remarkably dry but no matter how many torches, wood or bodies the orcs burned, the chill was always there.

"What?"

Argun had a space to himself at the end of wide tunnel. Most of the lads slept in two large communal chambers on the other side of the complex. The original occupants had seemingly taken a small, natural cave system and carved out additional rooms and tunnels to extend the warren-like layout to twice its

original size. No trace or hint of who they might have been had been found.

Meathead stepped though the opening into the room where Argun and Jarl were dicing again. Jarl was a sly one and useful for his brains, but Argun only trusted him when he could see him and so liked to keep his lieutenant around when he wasn't otherwise occupied. Meathead was his Sergeant from the former Greatax regiment and while a little slow, he had a ferocious battle temper and could swing a Greatax like no-one Argun had seen before.

"We got visitors boss. Tinker just came back in. The other scouts is dead 'e says.". Meathead began picking at the huge pale green scar running down his left arm; a gift from a cavalryman's blade back at The Bickervale. "'e don't look too good Boss".

Tinker, Gobban and Rikks were the only three goblins who had survived the events at Yurdhaven Cross and Argun had employed them as scouts and sentries in the woods around the complex. Meathead picked up the small bundle of cloth and limbs he'd been dragging behind him and dumped it on the floor in from of Jarl.

Orc Moraxes
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Argun grabbed Tinker by the scruff of the neck and lifted him up level with his eyes. "He don't look great I'll grant you that" he observed casually, "But then 'e always was an ugly sod. What 'appened Tinker?"

The goblin moaned and tried to lift its head but was struggling to find the energy to speak. Argun tightened his grip and the sentry squealed. "E….e…… elves. Many-lots". The effort of speaking too much, Tinker passed out and Argun, irritated, growled and tossed him aside.

"The place was remarkably dry but no matter how many torches, wood or bodies the orcs burned, the chill was always there."

"Seems we've got company lads. Good. We've all been getting a bit lazy of late and Jarl and I were just discussing moving on out of 'ere. We all need some bigger scraps and I want to be out on the plains again. If that upstart Chok still fancies 'imself a better Krudger than me I think I'd like to show him the error of 'is ways. We need to build the band back up again." He stood and flexed his massive arms, trophy rings clattering across the blue tattoos and battle scars.

"Get Jurk to prepare the traps" he commanded, "and tell Brekkun to get 'is 'airy arse out there and lure 'em in."

"Brekkun don't 'ave an 'airy arse boss" said Meathead "not since 'e sat on that knight's oil lamp".

Argun chuckled, a deep crackling belly rumble. He turned to Jarl. “Want first pickings?”

It was at Harvon’s Pass where Argun had met Jarl. The leathery skinned orc from the deserts of the South had been taken captive by slavers of the Twilight Kin during a raid. The slavers were returning home and converging with others of their kind in a large host heading back to the Abyss. Jarl knew his fate at the hand of the elves was going to be despairing, painful and ultimately fatal.

One evening, the Kin had picked Jarl out for special attention. They had taken his eye that night. Already tortured and tormented during the journey, many captives had not survived by the time the Kin were assembling in Harvon’s Pass before moving on. As the warhorns blew in alarm that fateful evening, Jarl knew it would be his chance to escape.

Strangling his guards with the chains that they thought bound him, Jarl managed to then free and rouse the other surviving orc prisoners and began to run riot in the elven encampment. Assaulted by Argun’s force on one side and undermined by a revolt from within their own camp, the Kin were overrun and slaughtered. Jarl impressed Argun and quickly rose to prominence in the warband.

Whenever there were elves to fight, Jarl took the lead, his loathing for the race ignited in a frenzy of violence that was fed by hate.

Goblin Sneak
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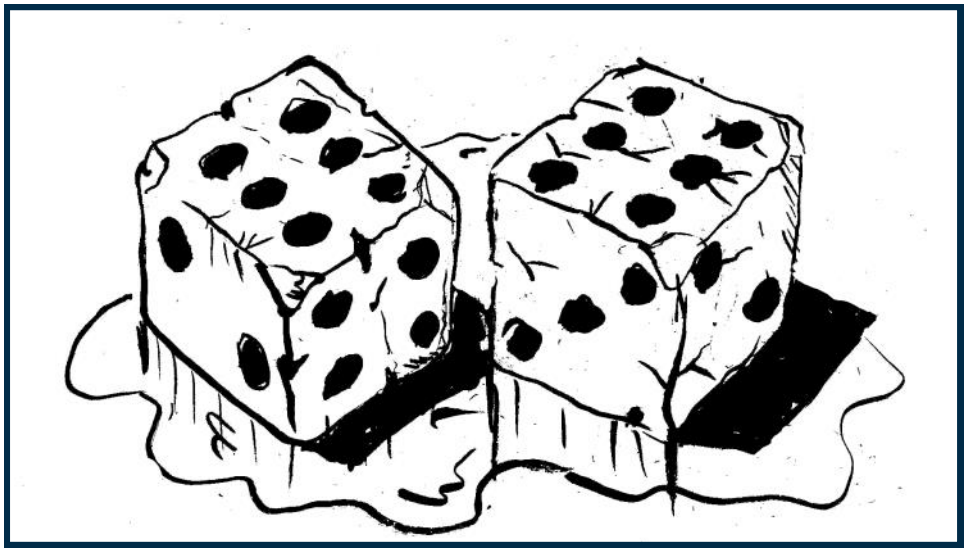
“Yeah” he snarled, picking up his Ax from where it rested against the wall. “Show me where they are”.

Continued in Ironwatch #2!



By Boris Samec

Making a Splash at the Table

A River Terrain Tutorial
by Jack Evans

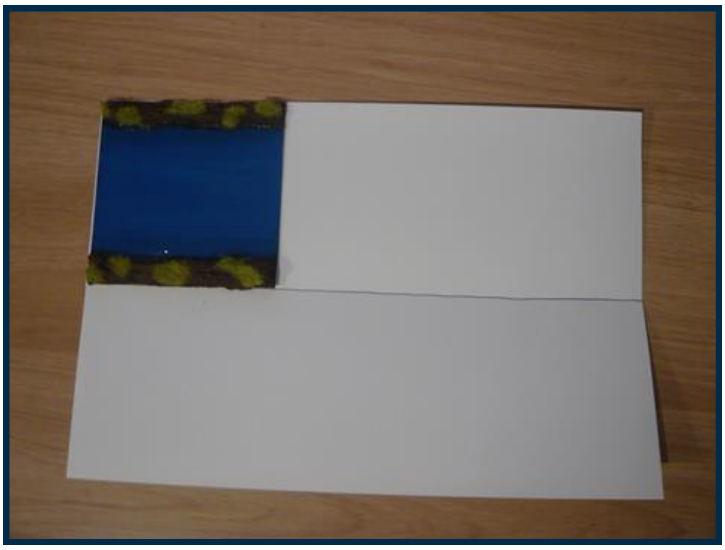
Recently, I made a gaming board for my house, so I can invite friends over and game at home. This is great, however I needed some scenery to make the board come alive. Many clubs struggle to have enough scenery, or enough interesting scenery. Whatever your reasons for making a river like mine are, I will promise you two things. It'll be cheap (about a fiver for mine), and a lot of fun.

I'm really not the greatest modeller in the world, but I made this river a few days ago, and was really pleased with the result, considering how easy it was, and how cheap it was. So, without further ado, you'll need:

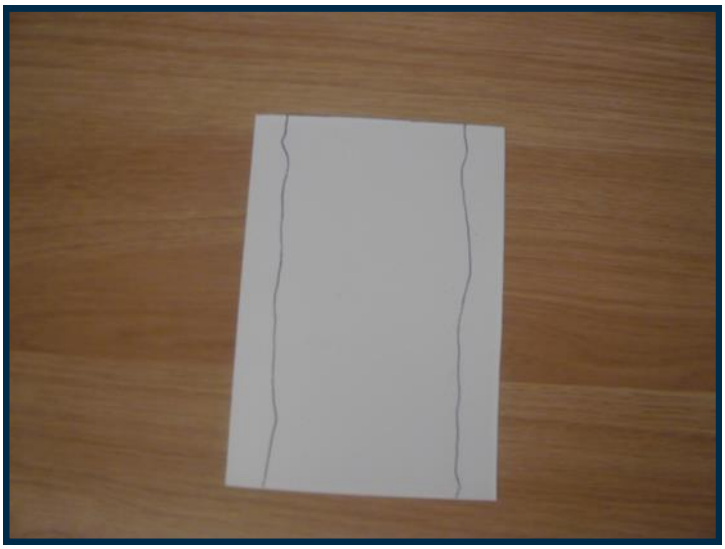
- A strong work ethic
- Several sheets of 0.5mm plasticard, (You could go thicker, mine were about 50p each)
- Gap filler, Spackling filler, or Decorator's caulk (See picture, about £2-3. B&Q it, or eBay)
- Sand, PVA glue, paint, flock and brushes
- A positive attitude.

First, you'll have to decide on a size. I made my river 3" wide, and then a

A Caulk Gun



Fold the plasticard to get the 4.5" width



Doodle out your banks to add caulk to later

It doesn't have to be perfectly smooth, as slightly rugged banks look more natural.

The undercoated river, after applying sand.

The initial drybrushing and bank coloration

3/4" bank on either side. I could lie and say this was intentional, as the river would halve movement, models travelling 6" could move from bank to bank in one turn… But I'd be lying. My plasticard comes in A4 sized sheets, and 4.5" just happens to be half the size of A4. Fold it, cut it. Simple.

After cutting your plasticard to size, mark out the banks. As I said, this is an A4 sheet, cut in half, then half again, but feel free to do whatever you want.

After this, we're going to apply a stream of filler on either bank. This will raise them, and therefore make the river look recessed. After I'd piped them on (like frosting on a cake), I smoothed them out with a stick. I say smoothed, it a lot of ways I made it rougher - Just levelled off the bank to make a steady gradient. Like the picture below.

Apply sand on the banks. This is optional, but its best to texture it like your gaming board. I'm going with sand and patches of flock.

This is the assembly done, so undercoat your river.

Paint the banks to match your gaming board. I drybrushed with Vallejo *Beastly brown* (citadel bestial brown).

(Ed note: Drybrushing is a technique that that uses a paintbrush with almost all the paint wiped off and brushed lightly over the surface of the model)

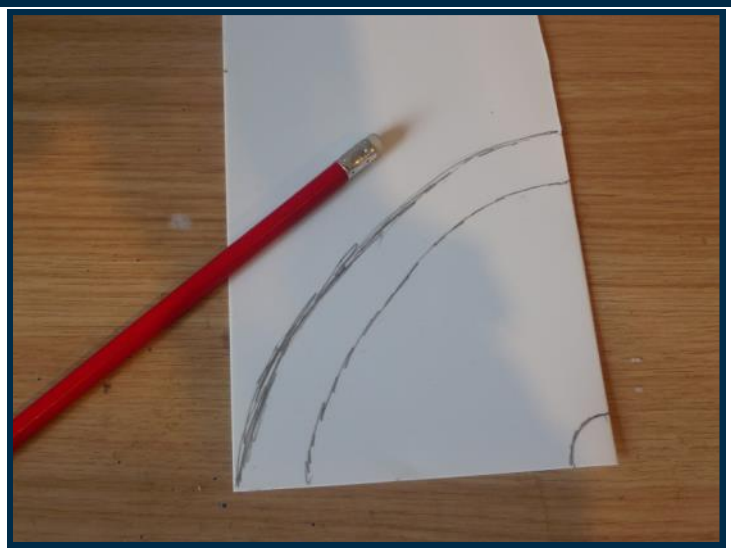
When it comes to painting the water, start with a very dark navy as a basecoat. Apply this all over, but especially to the water near the banks. Move up to a lighter colour (I went from citadel regal blue, to citadel enchanted blue) as you want the river to be lighter towards the middle. Drybrush a very light blue over the top, moving downriver, and the brushstrokes will make the river appear to be moving. After this, I gloss varnished the water, but feel free to use water effects if you have it on hand. I then flocked the banks with some cheap flock.

Corner pieces, bridges, and fords are really simple. Done exactly like normal pieces, but with whatever alterations.

The river section is now finished!

Pictured to the right are some of my finished pieces lined up to form a raging current.

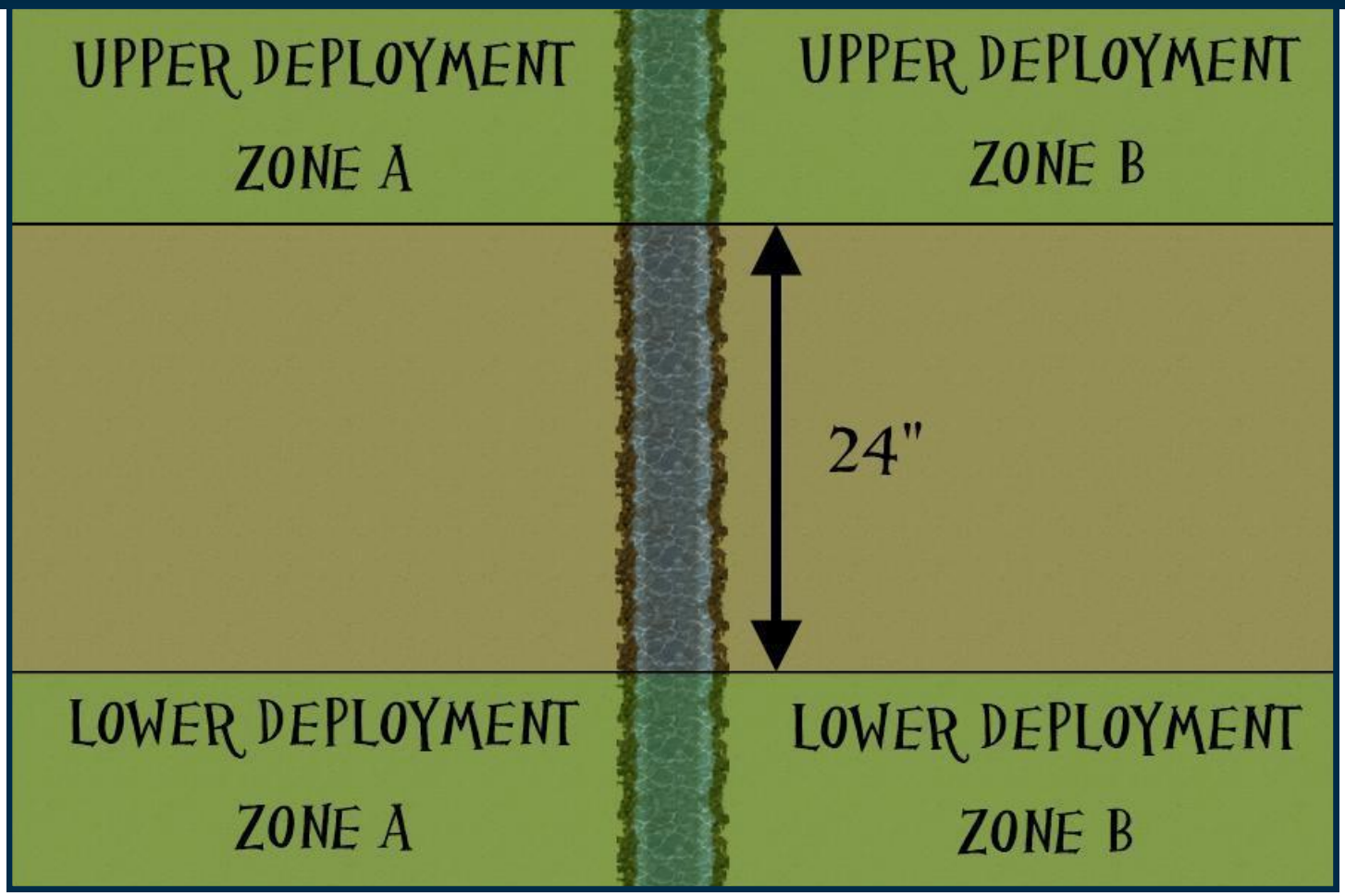
Now to put the brand-new river sections to good use!



Sketching out a corner section

You can almost hear the fish!

A formidable obstacle for anything without Jump Packs or the ability to Fly!



Deployment for the scenario "A River Runs Through It"

Theatre of War:

A River Runs Through It

This battle is fought on a standard 6x4 board. Running through the middle is a river, or a seam of rocky outcrops, or a small forest. Whatever you use, it is impassable terrain. Deployment zones are as normal, 12" from the center of the table.

Before the battle starts, each player secretly assigns each of his units to either the right hand side of the battlefield, or the left. (Feel free to come up with better sounding names – "Kingside" and "Castleside" or even "Port" and "starboard" if you feel so nautically inclined.) Once assigned, a unit probably will not cross, or even interfere with the other side (Unless they have fly, or a decent ranged attack) so think carefully about this choice.

The game is a standard *KILL* scenario, scoring victory points for destroying opponents units. However, during the battle, units may move off the board, through their opponent's board edge. From there, the models will ride on to destroy the opposing encampment.

This has particular strategic value – So for every unit that moves off like this, the player gains *DOUBLE* the units cost in victory points. *(Example – Albert has scored 1200 points for killing units, and has a 55 point unit move off his opponent's deployment zone. His score is 1310, [1200+2x55])*

For added variation, add a small ford or bridge in the direct center of the river, allow players to switch a set number of units from right to left after seeing their opponents deployment, or create rules for holding units in reserve, which can then appear on either side of the battle.

Designers notes –

Jack: What I like about this is there is no obvious set up that's best. You could split your forces, 50/50 to ensure you don't allow your opponents to escape. You could gamble, and place a lot more on one side, hoping to run through your opponent and escape with a lot of victory points. Even letting your units escape is a tough choice - if they stayed on the board, they could continue to do damage to your opponent. Finally, will ranged weapons and warmachines become prized, or pointless?

Any and all feedback would be greatly appreciated. Let me know if you enjoyed it, or found it pointless. If you have any amazing ideas for a similar "Strategic Challenge", message me and we can work on it together. Enjoy!▪

Armored Troll Concept Sketch
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Asset Procurement

By Michael Grey

PART 1

Klaxons blared, invading every section of the ship with a volume of almost physical force. Spinning strobe lights accompanied the clamor; a constantly rotating bar of orange washing every surface, and ensuring everyone onboard knew this was no drill.

Lieutenant Klein stalked down the loading ramp, passed the long line of marines. Their body amour's hard lines reflected the caustic light as they snaked forward to collect their rifles. To Klein, it was as if some monstrously armored reptile was making its way to the hangar. *Not entirely inappropriate,* he thought.

The ceiling reared above as he emerged from the confined corridor and into the hangar. The ship's bay stretched the length of *Andromeda Star.* Rows of interceptors rolled out in either direction, hornets ready for when the nest was disturbed.

And if *'disturbed'* could ever be applied to a Corporation heavy cruiser, this would be it. Activity boiled around Klein as flight engineers primed the 'cepters, pilots downloaded attack plans and marines formed into teams.

He passed his own squad as he walked to the command platform. Pride rose when he saw they were among the first ready as Sergeant Haskomb ran them through their final checklist. Klein caught his eye as he passed and received the curtest of nods in return.

Better than nothing, he thought, and mounted the platform.

"Sub-Lieutenant, glad you could join us," Commander Zaman Kamry said, interrupting whatever he was saying to Lieutenants Garcia, Kahn and Wehnn.

"Apologies, Commander. It's the dichotomy of rank; furthest bunk from the bridge, but I'm thankful for the exercise."

Garcia and Kahn smiled at the joke but Kamry's expression hardened. His demeanor matched the ironed naval jacket and starched high collar precisely. "This is no time for humor, Sub-Lieutenant."

"Zaman, let the boy go." Klein had not seen Captain Winters. He stood away from the central table, staring into banks of monitors rolling with data. His fatigues disrupted his outline, blending him into what shadows the screens allowed. Klein felt a measure of relief to see they worked, only for that relief to whither as Winters turned. The Captain's

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usually congenial face was porcelain pale.

"Now we're all here, perhaps you can tell them everything you know," said Winters, coming to the table.

For a moment it looked as if Kamry would say something in return. Instead decades of naval training came to the fore, although the sour look on his face went nowhere. He turned a dial on the table and a deep green 3-D projection of the local system sprung up between them.

The *Andromeda's* position, lost amid the gulf of stars, was represented by the pulsing orange coda of SLA Industries, spinning sedately as if it were just another moon. Klein recognized the closest planet, Declan Six; a hydrogen-heavy gas giant with a lone silvery ring. Declan Six occupied most of the projection, with Declan Five, their destination, hovering innocently at the table's periphery. A ghostly thread linked Declan Five to the Andromeda.

"As you can see we are still on course for D-Five. SLA's contract on the planet still stands and will be acted upon. But four hours ago the navi-com picked up trace signals from D-Six."

Kamry pushed another button and a revolving net sprung up on the projection, from the *Andromeda* towards the gas giant.

"Moon?" asked Garcia with a raised eyebrow.

Kamry shook his head. "That's what it was logged as initially, but it didn't match any of the recorded moons' orbits. The navi-com sat on it for another two hours, tracking and monitoring. It raised the alarm when we came into scan range." He held up his tablet and flicked the screen. "*Uneven, asymmetrical object. Albedo of 0.17%. 18% raw mineral of varying nature, 78% refined ore in perpendicular layers, forming levels airtight to vacuum.*"

Klein and the other Lieutenants turned their attention to the projection, focusing on Declan Six. "A ship," breathed Wehnn.

"What was once one, certainly," said Kamry. He pressed another button and a second icon illuminated over the table. This one, like the *Andromeda,* displayed by an icon holding seemingly still over the planet.

"Further scans could not identify the vessel's origin. It's not on our or any other corporation's list of ship templates. The closest likeness is the Asterians, but if it is it's not one we've encountered before. But what data has been returned is telling us it's

old. Very old. It's been in space long enough to be caught against several meteors. That would be the 18% raw mineral, but somehow the strikes fused to the hull rather than destroy it."

"So it's a salvage op," said Garcia.

"Not quite," said Winters. He leaned in and pushed a button on Kamry's control panel. Another bowed trail lead from Declan Five, this time away from the planet, taking it near the gas giant's gravity well. "Commander?" said Winters.

Kamry's expression at being interrupted was thunderous yet controlled. "This is the route of Corporation Planetary Mapper designation ASX609. That was the exploration vessel which mapped and logged the Declan system. It recorded D-Five's Asset Level as 'Exploitable' before leaving to

"Further scans could not identify the vessel's origin. It's not on our or any other corporation's list of ship templates. The closest likeness is the Asterians, but if it is it's not one we've encountered before."

go out-system, logging this as their intended route," he indicated the crescent path.

"However, all signals ended as they neared D -Six. It was assumed the planet had some unusual makeup, such as an unusually high magnetized iron core, or inner tectonic activity releasing bursts of gamma radiation; something which would cause ASX609 to fall into the gravity well. The incident was

Corporation Heavy Weapon Team
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recorded and was marked to investigate. Once colonization had begun, obviously. However, when the time and position of ASX609's route are calculated to that of the new contact..." he tapped a series of buttons on the panel.

A tiny representation of a Corporation Mapper ship emerged from Declan Five and began a steady loop along the plotted course. At the same time the icon representing the contact reversed its spin and began to backtrack, following D-Six's curvature.

Klein's eyes went back to the Mapper. At regular intervals an orange box would appear above it, displaying flashes of data; speed, course, engine metrics. He looked between it and the contact again, and knew what would happen before the little theatre before him could play out.

ASX609 followed its inexorable path, passing into what would have been Declan Six's shadow while the contact bore down on it from above. Once the two met, ASX609 winked out of existence, and the contact

continued on its route.

"What happened?" said Klein.

"That is what we're going to find out, Lieutenant," said Winters. "Could have been they simply collided with an object they didn't see. Could be something else."

He shifted his stance, feet apart, hands crossed at his lower back. "That's all the intel we have. Teams Alpha through Theta will board at alternating levels with the Can Openers, and be aware the superstructure is made of some kind of dense alloy, so we'll be out of radio contact with the *Andromeda.* Sweep and find, people. Any questions?"

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"Which one is our pod?"

They all turned. Kaige had mounted the command platform with his usual silence, prompting the same from everyone else.

Klein felt himself tense involuntarily. All the Enforcers had that affect on him, but none more so than their leader, and the way Garcia's hand flexed near his pistol it was obviously not only him.

They had arrived the morning of their departure. No warning, no explanation. None necessary really, Klein thought. Kaige had walked into their final prep meeting, announcing himself without expanding on the tag. If it was a name or rank Klein didn't know.

"ASX609 followed its inexorable path, while the contact bore down on it from above. Once the two met, ASX609 winked out of existence, and the contact continued on its route."

"I didn't think you'd be joining us after you didn't answer the alarm, Kaige," said Winters, loading his words with deference.

The Enforcer turned his face to Winters, inclining it through the eight inches height difference. "We make our own preparations, Captain."

"With all due respect, Kaige, this appears to be nothing more than a recon mission. I wouldn't have thought your men would be interested."

"You do not need our reasons, Captain. We will board at the foremost of the vessel. Our coordinates have been uploaded to your systems."

And with that, he left, and Klein felt himself relax.

"No one said the robots'd be coming, Lieutenant."

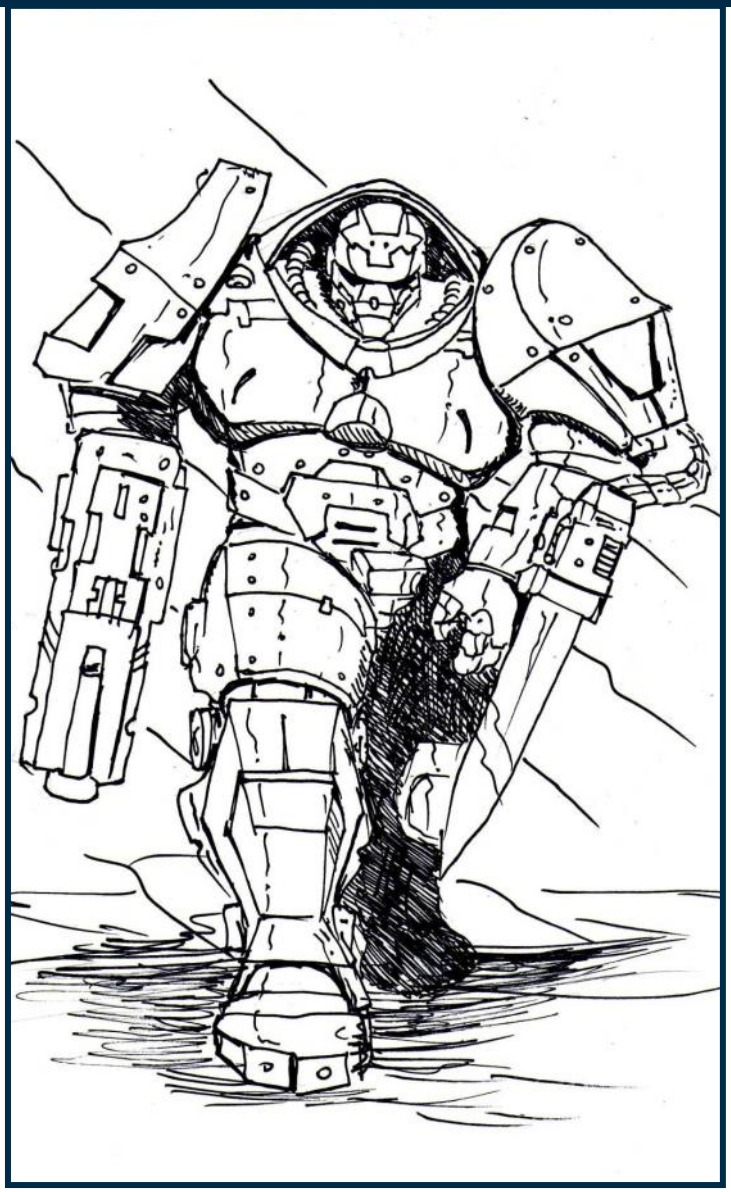
"Lawson you will not speak to an officer unless spoken to. Goddamnit son, do I have punch that information into you?"

Robots? Is that what the men have taken to calling them? Understandable, thought Klein. "It's all right, Sergeant, questions are permitted." He leaned forward as much as the pod's restraints would allow.

"We didn't know ourselves until we left. You all know how the Enforcer's work; if they decided they were coming along, nothing would have stopped them. Not even your fearsome reputation, Lawson." That got a laugh. "But it's a big ship and there's only five teams, plus them. Chances are you won't even see them on board. If you do, be smart and stay out of their way, okay?"

The squad said nothing to that. They were Corp Marines, and damn good ones. They had pride, and being reminded they weren't the best rankled.

The Enforcers had been assigned their own deck of the *Andromeda,* and since departure Klein had barely seen the black-armored soldiers. When he had it was mainly in the gym block, where the marines kept their bodies and skills sharp. They would enter, all



"They had arrived the morning of their departure. No warning, no explanation.. None necessary really"
by Boris Samec

of them, as far as he knew, although he never saw more than eight, and everyone else knew it was time to leave.

The first time Klein saw a younger marine do what could have been the biggest mistake of his life. He had just arrived, and didn't like having to leave straight away. He shouted at the nearest Enforcer, mere feet from his faceplate, using insults from half a dozen different planets.

Enforcer Strike Team
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The Enforcer had done nothing. Just stand there, face plate turned in the marine's direction, looking to Klein how someone else would regard an angry insect.

Whatever would have happened to the marine was averted when his sergeant hauled him away, still yelling, out from the room.

That left Klein, and the Enforcer turned to him. Klein didn't want to leave either but he knew futility when he saw it, so packed his bag and headed for the door. He stopped at the Enforcer, however, and ripped off a parade ground salute which would have brought tears to his old drill sergeant.

Before he left the Enforcer tilted his head a fraction, and Klein left feeling lucky on more than one count.

He leaned back, wedging his shoulders between Haskomb and the wall. The Incisor Mk 4 Full Insertion Craft was roomier than the old Mk 3s, but only barely so. A squad of ten would have to be very comfortable with another man's sweat before even a short journey was made.

They were already on their way to the contact, having been fired from the *Andromeda* like bullets. Klein was not looking forward to the landing. The *Incisor* was deigned to puncture a ship, sealing off the hole with quick hardening gel, securing atmospheric integrity in a boarding action, before the pointed lead end opened like a flower. Although in this case a flower whose petals could exert fourteen tons of force per square inch. And in typical marine fashion the image of a flowering bud was passed over in favor of *Can Openers* for a nick name.

He had been on two such insertions before. Neither was pleasant. It was rough and dangerous, with a thousand things which could go wrong. And that was before the doors had even opened.

"Impact in T minus 10 seconds, gentlemen," said a static-filled voice through the intercom. "Happy landings."

"Go get f-", started one Marine before the pod was shaken so violently Klein's vision blurred, and he thought his teeth would be jarred from his gums. The moment came with the internal kick of turbulent deceleration and the torturous squeal of twisting metal.

The sensation was over as quickly as it arrived. Sergeant Haskomb reacted first, out from this seat, shotgun in hand.

"Alright ladies, what are we waiting for, a welcoming party? Let's go! Go! Go!"

He slammed the underside of his first onto the red, flashing button by the door. At once the pressure seals hissed, and hydraulic gas discharged outside as the doors peeled open. The first marines were out before a full breach could be declared. No one wanted to be on enemy ground in the technological equivalent of a barrel.

"Clear!" came the cry, followed by three others. Klein stood on unsteady legs and followed the rest of the squad out. Rifle lights lanced out this way and that. They had breached in a hexagonal corridor, devoid of turns as far as the Can Opener's lights allowed, and black as space.

"The Enforcer had done nothing. Just stand there, face plate turned in the marine's direction, looking to Klein how someone else would regard an angry insect."

"Breach secured, Lieutenant." Haskomb marched behind his men, resting his shot gun on one shoulder and tapping his knuckles on the helmets of marines he was particularly happy with the positioning of.

Klein checked his tactical computer readout. Then rechecked it.

"Problem, Lieutenant?" Haskomb was regarding him with a sardonic smile. Klein ignored him and slapped the tac-com with an open palm. "We missed our target," he said when the screen didn't change.

Haskomb swore. "Goddamn navies couldn't find their arse with both hands."

"No, not that." He walked over to the wall the 'Opener had turned into an entrance. "We're forty meters further in than we should be." He rapped on the wall. Dull metal flaked away where his knuckles hit.

"Rust," said Haskomb over his shoulder. "Haven't seen that on a ship in a while."

"No, not rust." Klein picked up a lump which crumbled in his fist to sooty flakes. "Degraded." He looked up at an un-broken section and ran his hand over it. It felt warm under his palms. "It's no kind of alloy I know. But everything degrades over time. The data said it was old." He dropped the rotting metal.

"Old enough to rot un-rustable metal?" Haskomb's voice had an edge of uncertainty he'd never heard in the Sergeant

Enforcer Suppression Team
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before.

"It doesn't matter, the mission remains." Klein wiped his hand on his fatigues. "The scans didn't penetrate this far so we'll have to make our own map."

"As you will, sir," said Haskomb, sounding more like his old self.

Klein's radio crackled. "Theta? Come in Klein, this is Winters."

"Captain, this is Klein."

"He had been on two such insertions before. It was rough and dangerous, with a thousand things which could go wrong. And that was before the doors had even opened"

Enforcer Strike Section
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Enforcer Assault Team
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There was a short pause before Winters answered. "Sitrep, Lieutenant."

"Breach successful. Although we're deeper than anticipated." He looked down the corridor in either direction.

"Us too," said Winter's static laden voice. "Same with Beta. No word from Delta or Gamma yet. They probably landed in too far for radio. Orders remain, Lieutenant; sweep and record. Winters out." And with that the radio went dead.

He looked up to see Haskomb looking at him, and shrugged. "Sweep and record."

END OF PART 1

Tune into Issue #2 for Part 2!

For more stories like this, visit Michael's blog at www.michaelgrey.com.au

Malki's Prize
A Kings of War Battle Report

By Neil Dixon

Malki's lips curled into a smile. He was expecting resistance, but an alliance of Dwarfs and Elves? The desperation of his opponents reeked of humiliation.

The order of the cleansing will never rest while life breathes. Now is the time of the hunters, the blood drinkers, the Vampires.

Malki looked towards his new born.

"Eldessa my child, take our infantry and devour their right flank on my signal. For victors of valour we shall claim our prize," he said.

The prize had been hidden from Malki for too long. He would find his Master's scattered armour and resurrect him to once again lead the Order.

His thoughts were interrupted as Lieutenant Arifficuss spoke.

"Sir, your commands?"

"Ready the cavalry. We will charge these fools into submission!"

This was a practice game for Clash of Kings, the Kings of War tournament in February 2013. 1500 points per side was the ideal size, but with 1000 points ready, I was desperate to field them in a Kings of War battle. With

By Boris Samec

my Dwarfs boosted by 500 points of Elven allies, I took on Andy Harris, who blooded his Undead army for the first time.

After picking forces and setting up terrain, a "Pillage!" scenario was rolled with seven objectives. A force would count as winning if it had captured at least two more objectives than the opposing force; otherwise the game was a draw.

Turn 1

The Dwarfs picked the table edge, and the Undead won the first turn

The Soul Reavers, Revenant Cavalry and Wraiths had no fear as they headed right towards the Dwarf lines at full speed! A suicidal move perhaps, considering the close proximity of the Cannon. The Ghouls moved up on the right in support. The infantry

Undead

Andy Harris

I believe that Revenants are the best infantry unit in Kings of War, so I included two regiments as my mainstay. Skeletons and a troop of Ghouls served as cheap backups, and will give my opponent's missile troops a soft target to think about rather than shooting my Revenants. My characters were there to Dark Surge, with the Revenant King supplying some close combat prowess. Wights will support my infantry with added punch, as their nine attacks always wound on a two or more. As missile support I used two Catapults and a troop of Skeleton Archers with the Jar of Four Winds to extend their range from 24" to 36". I really want a hard hitting, fast column that could inflict serious damage by the second turn. I went for a troop of Soul Reavers, a Revenant Cavalry regiment and a Wraith troop.

SRT	Soul Reaver Troop (The Fog)	225
N	Necromancer	110
RK	Revenant King	120
AS	Army Standard Bearer	25
RCR	Revenant Cavalry Regiment (Full Command)	180
RR1	Revenant Regiment	110
RR2	Revenant Regiment	110
WT1	Wraith Troop	110
SR	Skeleton Regiment	70
SAT	Skeleton Archers (Jar Of Four Winds)	85
WT2	Wights	180
GT	Ghoul Troop	60
BC1	Balefire Catapult	65
BC2	Balefire Catapult	65
	TOTAL	1515

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Dwarfs

Neil Dixon

W	Warsmith	75
OG	Organ gun	80
C1	Cannon	85
C2	Cannon	85
IT1	Ironwatch troop	100
IT2	Ironwatch troop	100
IT3	Ironwatch troop	100
IR1	Ironclad Regiment (Full command)	110
IR2	Iron clad regiment (Full command)	110
BR	Berserker Regiment (Full command)	170
PGH	Palace Guard Half Regiment (Banner)	105
SR1	Scout Regiment	140
SR2	Spearman Regiment (Full command)	135
BT1	Bolt thrower	75
BT2	Bolt thrower	75
	TOTAL	1495

I plumped for a missile themed force. Five war machines and a Dwarf Warsmith to give the Cannons one failed to hit reroll was a good start. With the Ironwatch and Scouts supplying extra shots, I was confident I could take out at least one Undead unit per turn before they reached my lines. My plan was to sit back and counter charge. Berserkers are excellent for this, as they have a 10" charge with twenty five attacks! Similarly, I had to take Palace Guard, as they are one of the best Elven combat units. A twenty model regiment is needed for each war machine, so I took Ironclad and Elf Spearman because they are both cheap and solid.

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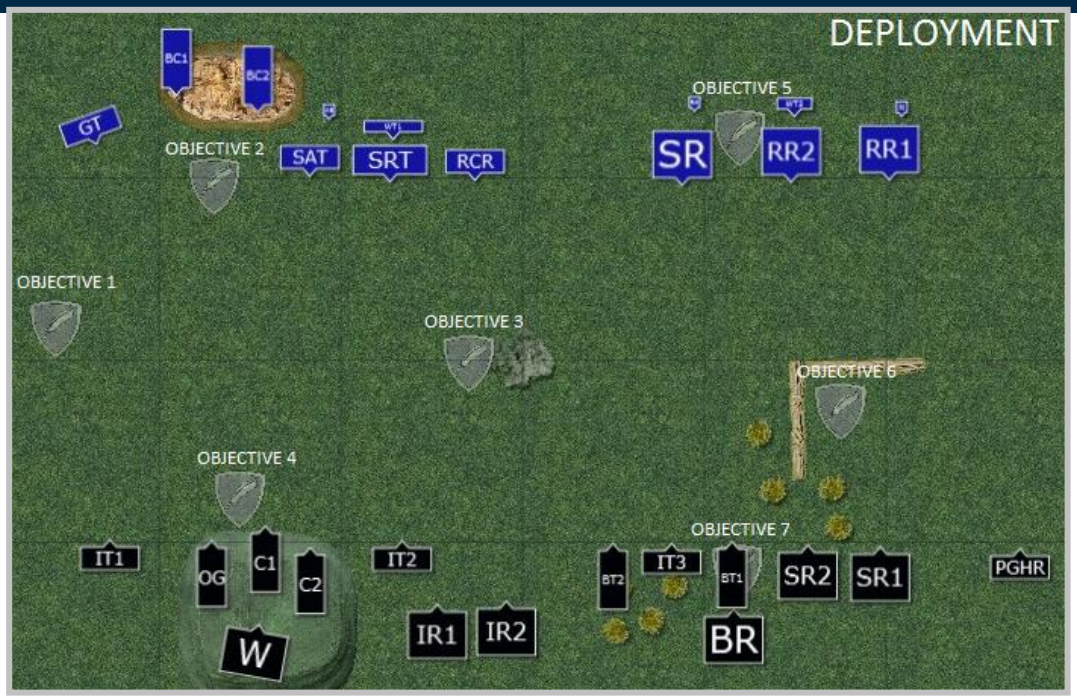


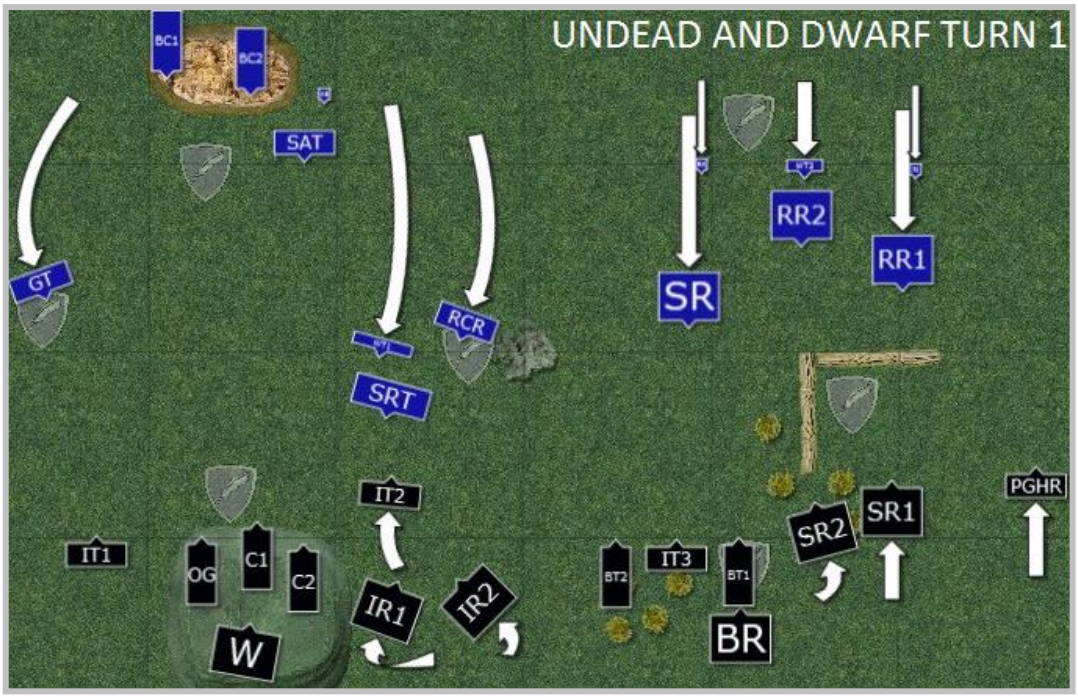
shambled forward on the left flank, aided by Dark Surge. A character rolls a set number of dice, and for each result of a four or more, an extra inch is moved. Very useful, as Undead Shambling units cannot move At the Double. A duel with the Dwarf missile battery was issued by the Undead artillery, but only the Bowmen caused one wound on the Organ Gun.

The Ironwatch valiantly moved into the path of the Soul Reavers. Although it sacrificed their ability to shoot this turn, by receiving a charge it would mean the Cannons should get an extra round of shooting. The Ironclad looked on, manoeuvring so they could counter charge the following turn.

Cannon balls were polished, kissed for luck and aimed squarely at the Soul Reavers. When the smoke cleared they were still standing! A Bolt Thrower had more luck, causing two wounds but it would not be enough to stop the charge onslaught next turn. The trend continued on the right flank, as the Revenants received one wound from a Bolt Thrower and an Ironwatch troop.

Turn 2

The Revenant Cavalry were the first to try and win glory in battle as they received the order to ride down the Ironwatch, who had conveniently marched into their path. Wraiths, Soul Reavers and Ghouls on the Undead right moved up in support ready to charge next turn. The Revenants, Skeletons and Wights on the Undead left advanced at a steadier pace, Dark Surges willing them on.



The Undead firepower again continued to target the Dwarf equivalents, with one of the Balefire Catapults causing seven wounds and taking off the Organ Gun – ouch!

As expected, the Revenant Cavalry did their work with silent determination, causing seven wounds on the doubty Ironwatch, making them run from the field. The nearby Ironclad sharpened their axes ready for revenge.

Crying out the names of their felled Ironwatch battle brothers, the Ironclad smashed into the Revenant Cavalry in front of the Cannons. Causing seven wounds and rolling ten for the nerve test, the cavalry were seen off – just!

On the Dwarf right flank, the Berserkers and the Elf Spearmen were content to manoeuvre behind the Ironwatch, ready to counter charge the approaching Undead infantry.

Predictably, the Cannon completely failed to cause any hits. The Warsmith may have to start looking for a new job after this battle! Luckily for the Dwarfs, their right flank had more success as the Elven Bolt throwers were proving consistently more reliable. Combined with a hail of crossbow bolts from the Ironwatch, a unit of elite Revenants was destroyed.

The Ironclad regiment reigned victorious over the Revenant Knights. The Soul Reavers and Wraiths pick easier but no less deadly targets– the cannons.

Turn 3

The relentless Undead infantry reached the Dwarf lines, as the Skeletons charged the Ironwatch, causing two wounds. On the Undead right flank, the Ghouls charged another Ironwatch troop, inflicting a respectable five wounds. The Cannon crew prepared to sell their souls dearly as the Soul Reavers and Wraiths finally got to grips with them. The Wraiths caused three wounds, but the hardy Dwarfs passed the nerve test and lived to fight another turn! The Soul Reavers showed the Wraiths how it was done, wiping out the other Cannon.

The Undead missile battery again proved their capability, causing eleven hits on an Ironclad Regiment. The remaining regiment looked on in disbelief as their battle brothers pulled up their mail armour, threw down their weapons and fled the field!

The Ironwatch on the Dwarf left charged back into the Ghouls. It was turning out to be a bloody tussle, with four wounds caused on the flesh eaters. Meanwhile, the Ironwatch on the right decided combat was not their forte, pulling back to let the Bolt Throwers do their worst. Five wounds were caused, but it failed to send the Skeletons back to their graves.

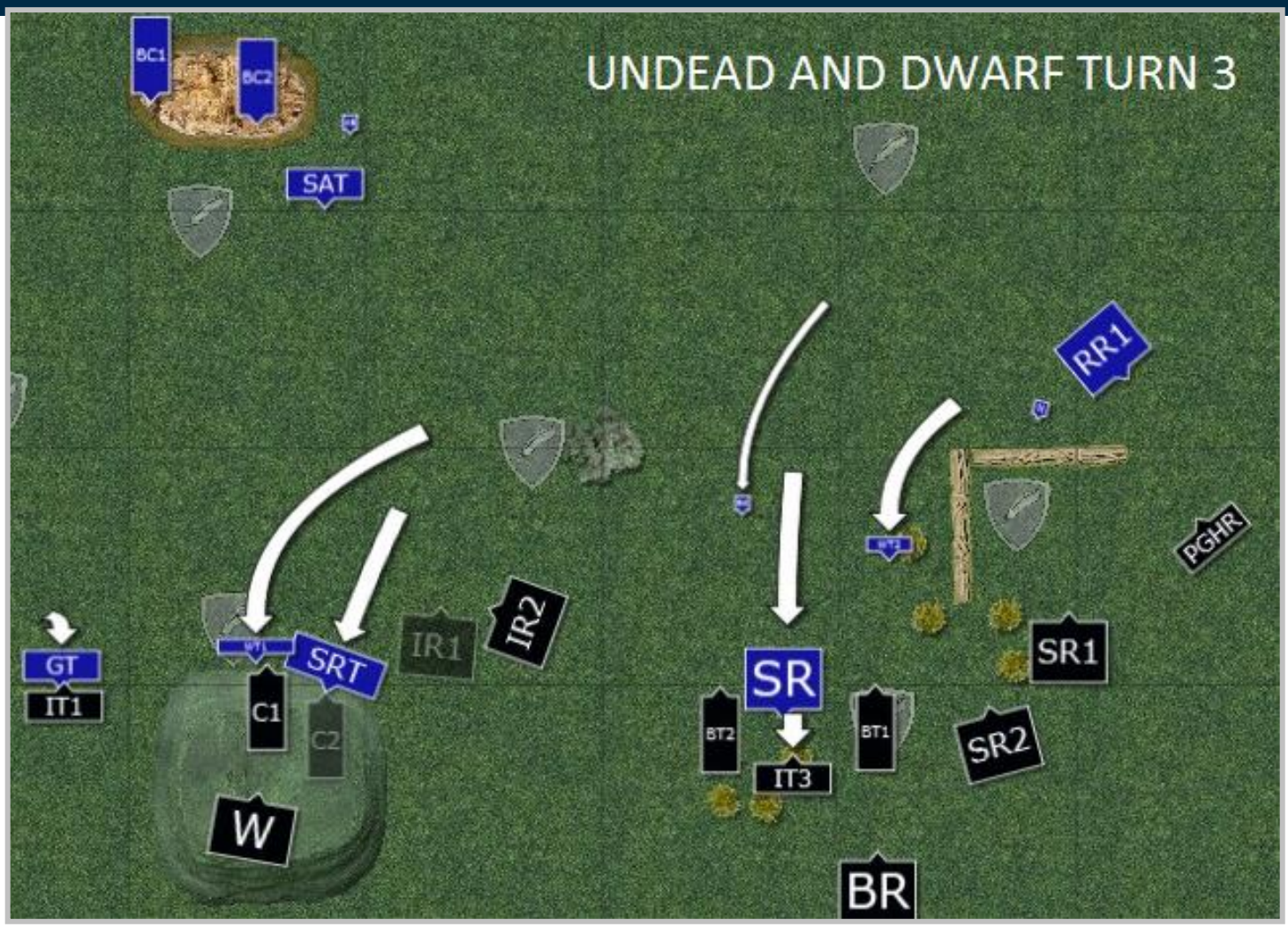
Turn 4

The Undead got the chance to do what they do best; fight in combat. The Wights charge a Bolt Thrower, the Ghouls charge back into the Ironwatch, whilst the Soul Reavers charge the Warsmith.

The Ghouls finally win the upper hand, scoring five wounds on the Ironwatch, running them down and feasting on Dwarf flesh.

The Soul Reavers cause six damage on the Warsmith. With his remaining Cannon taken out by the Wraiths, he defies the odds stacked against him and hangs around for

A Balefire Catapult overlooks the battlefield.
By Stuart Smith



this turn at least!

On the Undead left, the Wights conclusively wiped out the Bolt Thrower, causing a very impressive thirteen casualties. The Skeletons silently do their work against Ironwatch who retreated last turn, causing another five wounds, and running them off the field.

The Skeletons charge the Ironwatch as the Wights descend upon the Bolt Thrower

With battle cries of "Revenge!" the Dwarfs on the right flank counter charge. The Skeletons crumble to dust after an onslaught by the Berserkers causes another twelve wounds. The Elven Spearmen try to match the blood thirstiness of the Dwarfs, but only cause three wounds on the Wights.

The Ironclad edge towards the central objective, wary that the Soul Reavers could charge down the hill at any moment.

The Skeletons promptly get wiped out by the counter-charging Berserkers, while the Elf Spearmen support their allies by taking on the Wights

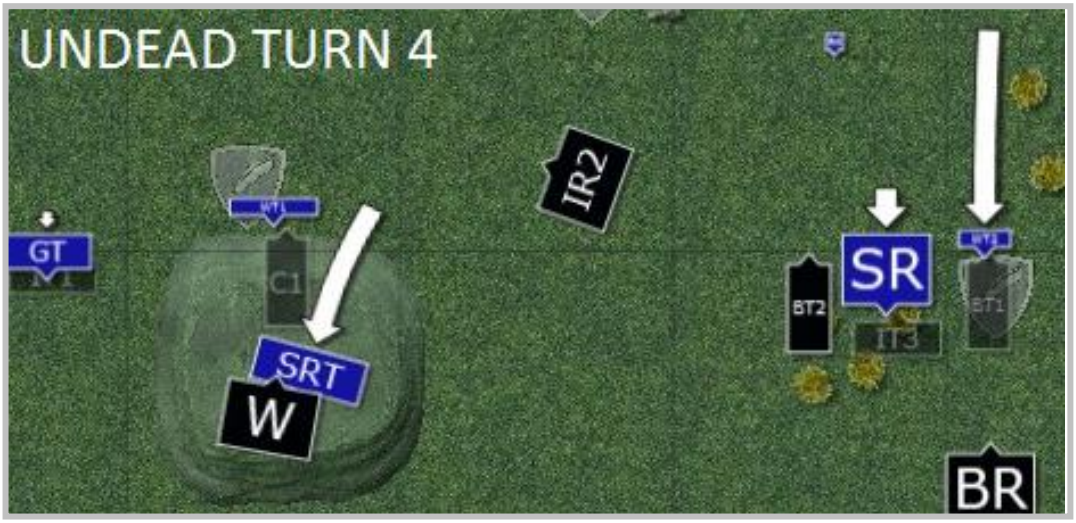
Turn 5

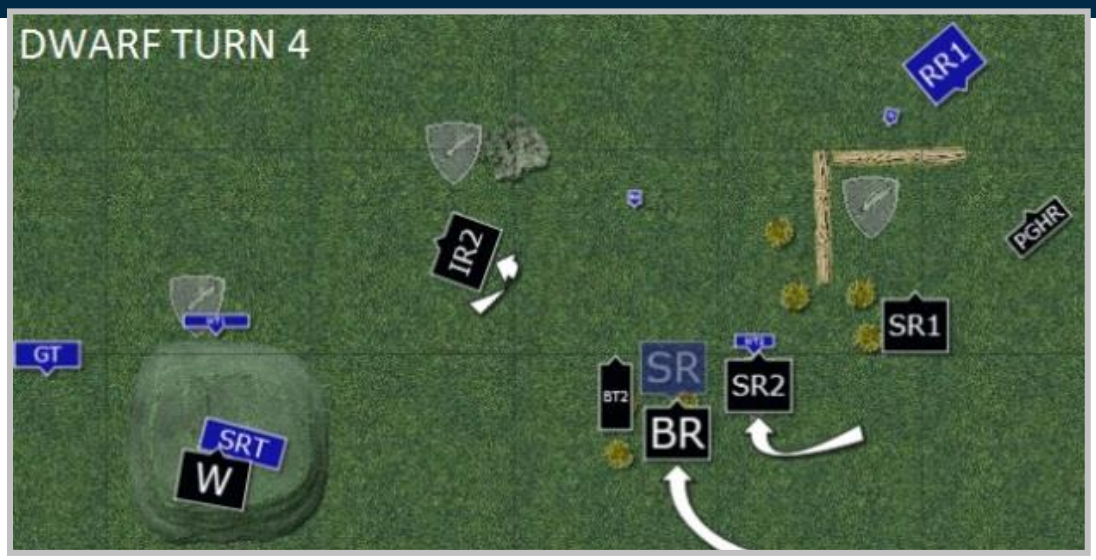
The Revenants in reserve back away from the Palace Guard, noting the important objective to their rear. Three dead warriors rise from the grave, replenishing their numbers the Bolt Throwers worked so hard to deplete. With no need to Dark Surge, the Necromancer named the regiment in his chants of the Heal spell.

The Revenant King charges the remaining Bolt Thrower, causing three wounds. The Elves remain steady, ready to fight again next turn.

The Wraiths scream in triumph, as the Warsmith finally succumbs. The Undead right flank is triumphant, as they have completely decimated all Dwarfs that stood against them.

On the Dwarf right flank, the Berserkers and Spearmen force the souls of the Wights back into the underworld. Five wounds were caused, resulting in a failed nerve test. The Scouts move to capture an objective and the Palace Guard advance towards the Revenants, remaining just out of range for their counter charge. Again, the Ironclad edge towards the objective in the centre, hoping they might be able to end the battle alive.



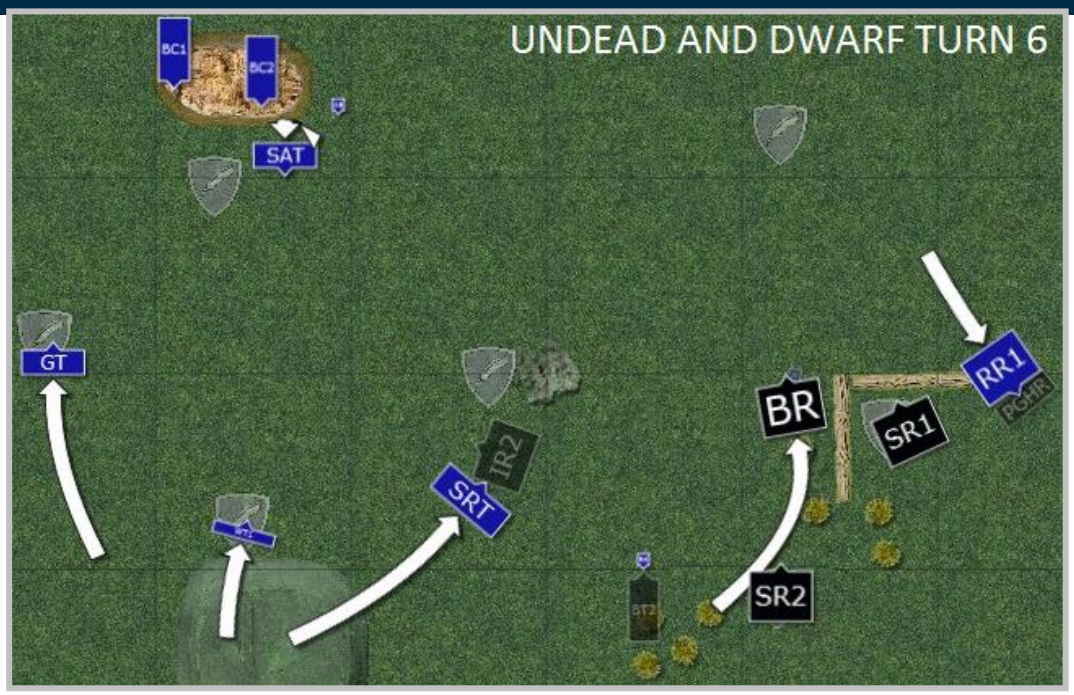


Turn 6

The Undead force receive orders to consolidate their positions, with the Bowmen moving towards the objective in their deployment zone, whilst the Ghouls and Wraiths both retreat towards their nearest objectives.

The Palace Guard had not been as careful as they thought as the Revenants mustered their dark energy to move. Eyeing the Elves, and ignoring the objective behind, they charge into combat! Three wounds were enough to make the Palace Guard turn tail and flee. A costly mistake by the Dwarf player, and a very well played gamble by the Undead!

The Soul Reavers rush down the hill to clash with the Ironclad. They take the regiment to thirteen wounds, reaping the souls of their third Dwarf regiment this battle. The objective the Ironclads jealously guarded is now open for the taking by the elite Undead cavalry if another turn is rolled.



The Berserkers charge the Necromancer, causing twelve wounds and easily annihilating the evil sorcerer. The Elf Scouts have less luck, not causing enough damage on the Revenants to win the objective.

Another turn is played on a D6 roll of four. The die is tensely rolled, as the battle is currently a draw, but could shift either way. The result is a five and the battle continues!

Turn 7

The Soul Reavers capture the objective in the centre, whilst the Revenants charge the Scouts. The Revenants cause four wounds, but the stealthy Elf warriors fight on, continuing to contest the objective.

After a lull, the Catapults hope for a lucky strike in the dying moments of the battle. They target the Elf Spearmen but a double one is rolled for hits! With the regiment now on seven wounds, it remains steady after a nerve test.

The Revenant King valiantly takes on the Berserkers, but the Undead general fails to cause any wounds.

In the dying moments of the battle, the Berserkers ignore the Revenant King and capture an objective in the Undead deployment zone. The Scouts try to break the Revenants to win back their objective. They caused three wounds, but the elite Undead warriors remaining resolute.

The final objectives are counted, resulting in a win for the Undead!

By Neil Dixon

By Neil Dixon

Conclusion

Dwarfs

If only it ended on Turn 6! A draw slipped from my grasp as an extra turn meant the Undead contested the objective held by the Scouts and took the objective in the middle with the Soul Reavers. It was a closer result than the battle looked, as my forces were all but wiped out.

My left flank completely collapsed and my right flank struggled to get moving.

In hindsight I should have deployed all my war machines in one big battery. Their luck was mixed, with my Cannons failing to hit anything, but my Bolt Throwers had moderate success. If I could have combined my fire I may have caused more significant damage. Faced with that many missile troops, it might have meant my war machines did not have the Undead cavalry breathing down their necks!

Again, wishful thinking, but my artillery may have had chance to cause more damage if I gained the first turn.

I have learnt that I need to definitely stack the odds in my favour when using a missile troop themed force. Cannons are better than Organ Guns, and I need to arm my Ironwatch with hand guns instead of crossbows to gain an extra plus two to the damage roll. With Undead Wraiths and Revenants being defence six and five respectively, they are very hard to hurt.

Undead

I am very pleased with my Undead army, although I believe luck was on my side. The fast attack and artillery sections lead by the Soul Reavers cleared one side of the board whilst the opposite side was contested till the end. My regiment of the game was the Soul Reavers. Man, these guys are tough. A defence of six, hitting on a three or more, and adding two to the damage roll in combat from Crushing Strength, they certainly killed more than they were worth this battle. The Berserker Regiment would be the regiment to avoid in future. With twenty five attacks they are very nasty!▪

By Boris Samec

The Owl and the Blade

By John Hoyland

Part One:
The Sundering

I

"The gates are closed to you and yours."

Such simple words. Such a weight of meaning.

Such terrifying understatement.

The *gates* were so much more than that little word said. They were vast, and carried the weight of a mountain above their lofty arch. They were stone, and carved from the mountain itself. They were closed, and could not be opened from the outside, whether by herald's plea or cannon's demand.

Deor Ule stared up at them, seeing as if for the first time the runes of welcome and of warding that were carved there.

Determination clamped Deor's jaw shut and melancholy ringed his eyes around with grey.

"I will make such a home," he whispered to himself, "That for a hundred times a hundred generations my people will be proud of their Hold and of their name."

"Husband." There was a softness to the voice; a kindness and also a longing. "Set

By Neil Dixon

By Neil Dixon

your back to gates and your eyes upon the road. Your people would have you lead them."

Deor turned to his wife and offered her a wan smile and a shallow nod. He raised his hood, hiding his head from the sight of the gates. He was a stranger to the Hold now.

"Fare thee well, Deor the Owl," called the Warden of the Gates – he who had pronounced them closed a moment earlier. "May the Shining Ones ever guide you on the paths you take."

"May they indeed," muttered Deor Ule. "May they indeed."

II

Let it be recorded and faithfully set down that the People of the Owl (those of the Clan of the Lord Deor Ule), whose number was reckoned at three thousand and seventeen souls, have, in good faith and by binding oath sworn and attested before the altars, departed and sundered themselves hence from this Hold. Never more shall their deeds be recorded in these annals as being the deeds of our people. Never more shall reverence be given unto their ancestors, nor praises sung of their deeds.

They are sundered from us and are numbered among the unHolded, until such time as heralds shall come forth from them bearing tidings of Settling. At such a time, and if presented with petition, the Lords of the Clans of this Hold will determine whether the People of the Owl should be considered Holded and thus a true people, worthy of accord and of trade once more.

Thus it is and thus it shall be, from this day hence until the world does diminish unto darkness.

III

The first day of journeying was damp and grey. Drizzle filled the air, soaking cloaks and beards so that they clung to flesh, and lending a despondent note to the songs of lament that the People of the Owl sang.

The second day of journeying saw the sun break out and the north road dry hard so that by the third day of journeying the column of dwarfs hiked in a cloud of dust.

It was the dust, drying throats and eyes, which set the People of the Owl to grumbling. That and the fact that three days of travel had seen the mountains recede to little more than purple-grey smudges at the horizon. Mountains which, until mere days ago, had been their ancestral home.

"Now the bitterness of our unHolding begins to bite," the people said. "We are homeless and abroad in the wilderness. Where will we now call home and Hold?"

These things and others the elders brought to Deor, encamped in his tent at the center of a canvas city. The nightly setting of this city was already giving rise to streets and alleys, districts and quarters; here the merchants, there the artisans. Here the wealthy, there the poor.

By "Pathfinder Pete McF"

"The people grumble so soon?" asked Deor. "We will face much harder times in the days to come."

"There are those of us here who are warriors," said Breydd, commander of Deor's cavalry and, berserker or not, a voice whose counsel Deor often sought. "And for us the journey is yet easy. But your people are all here and those who know little of the military life, or of life above ground – let alone of the long roads in the wilderness – those for whom life has been *easy,* are finding the reality does not match the romance in their heads." The inclination of both head and voice made the target of his comments clear.

"You wish to level accusations, or merely insinuate?" snapped fat Areg, his cheeks coloring.

"I will spell it out as clearly as you wish, merchant," growled Breydd. "You are rich, and your riches have made you soft. Do not think I am ignorant to whose voice leads the complaining."

"Please," Deor's voice was soft, but rich with the authority of a Clan Lord. He sat hunched forward at his state table, elbows propping him up, fingers laced. He chewed a thumb nail. "Do not. Either of you. Areg; the road will get much harder yet. You must learn to live without the comforts you knew. This Sundering will be something of a leveler to us all. Breydd; you are a rare traveler among

my people and few are as hardy. Do not measure others against your own hardiness lest you come quickly to despise your people.

"I will need you both in the days ahead. Both of you possess skills that the other lacks, as do all here gathered." Deor looked up and around the table. "You are here – all of you – for your skills and your wisdoms. The one thing I ask of you – of all my people – is patience. Our road will be very dark at times, for we travel the wilderness. There will be great losses along the way, such hardships that it will seem the People of the Owl must surely be brought low.

By Neil Dixon

"The road will get much harder yet. You must learn to live without the comforts you knew"

"But we will endure. We are an ancient Clan with a proud history – the proudest! We will do more than simply endure; we will overcome."

"Tell us where we are going," urged Areg. "Let your people know!"

"Ah, that I cannot do," whispered Deor, "For I do not know. But I will tell you this; I follow the light of Ariadd, as I ever have. She will be my guide."

"You will follow a star into the wilds?" asked Areg.

"*A* star?" said Deor. "No. *My* star."

"It is enough," said Breydd.

"I am sworn to you," said Areg. "As are we all. It is enough for me also."

IV

Here begins the Chronicle of the People of the Owl.

Let it be recorded and faithfully set down that the People of the Owl are unHolded, a wandering people with neither home nor Hold.

We are thus because or Lord, Deor the Owl, made bad bargain with the Children of Man, who are a baseless folk and know little of honor. The bargain our Lord struck brought shame upon his head and upon his beard and thus brought shame upon his people. Thus it was decreed by the Lords of our

By "Pathfinder Pete McF"

former Hold (the name of which shall not be besmirched by being given letter herein) that we – the People of the Owl – should set forth upon the road and that the gates should be closed behind us.

Let it be recorded that this Chronicle did not begin until one week of our unHolding had passed.

Let it be recorded also that it was on this, the seventh day since our unHolding, that the first of our Rangers returned nigh to our camp and knelt at our Lord's feet.

V

"The world keeps turning? Sun and Moon continue to chase one another across the dome of the sky?"

"They do my Lord."

"Mantica cares little that we are unHolded."

"Indeed not, my Lord," Eolos the Ranger was never comfortable in the company of the great. He was never comfortable in company of any sort. The wilds were all he needed. To kneel at his Lord's feet, to feel the eyes of one so highborn upon him, filled him with something close to dread. He felt exposed and on show and Eolos the Ranger did not like to be on show.

"Tell me of the world."

Eolos the Ranger shifted his weight from one knee to the other. "I have seen little of the world, my Lord," he said.

Deor Ule smiled down from his dais. It was strange, Eolos thought, that the great should carry the trappings of their greatness with them when they journeyed. The stone dais – and the hardwood throne sat upon it – seemed at odds with the canvas they were under.

But this, Eolos supposed, was no ordinary journeying. The People of the Owl were unHolded. Deor Ule had no home in which to leave dais or throne.

Kingdoms of Men Kngihts by Andre Kritzinger

"Tell me of those parts of the world that you have seen," said Deor. "Tell me of the lands my people march across."

"They are claimed by a King of Men who is named Gratticus. His line have been Kings here for five generations. He is very proud of this. Among the Kingdoms of Men this counts as well-established royal lineage."

By Neil Dixon

Deor smiled, though without humor. "I am well acquainted with the ways of Men and with their kings and kingdoms."

"Of course, my Lord." There was an edge to Eolos' words that made Breydd shift at his Lord's side. It was an edge that said, *you do not know the ways of Man as well as you think; we are unHolded for that very reason.*

Deor held up a hand to forestall word or action from Breydd. "I know of this Gratticus, though only by reputation. What I have heard speaks of a harmful pride. I fear he will not let us cross his kingdom cheaply."

"More I have heard, Lord, even seen with these eyes, and would urgently share. The lands of this Gratticus are near overrun with orcs. He has three cities in his realm; two of them are destroyed. Only his capital is left. His people mutter that, even if the orc should be defeated, the Kingdom of Gratticus is ended."

Deor considered Eolos' tidings. "What number the orc?" he asked at length.

"The people of this land say ten thousand."

"And when fear and rumor are removed, what then number the orc?"

"I would say no more than two thousand, from the evidence I have seen."

"Two thousand. Thrice the number of warriors I have to command." Deor lost himself to thought for some moments. Then he nodded. "Can you get word to Gratticus King?" Eolos nodded. "Then, Eolos the Ranger, I charge you thus; take word to Gratticus King that I, Deor Ule, Clan Lord of the People of the Owl, follower of the star Ariadd, unHolded but staunch in battle, shall rid his lands of the orc and as payment I ask merely safe passage across his lands."

"It shall be so." Eolos rose from his knees, bowed deep and turned from his Lord's tent.

Deor looked to Breydd. "Battle and the orc call us," he said.

Dwarf hero by Jose Manuel Chasco Gonzalez

A slow smile spread across Breydd's face. "Then let us answer them," he growled happily.

To Be Continued in Issue #3

By Neil Dixon

From Golden Orcy to Ironwatch

An Undead Skeleton Horde's painting progression

By Alex "reVenAnt" Visentin

As my contribution, both in this magazine and the following ones, I'm gonna show you my Undead army, whose creation has been made possible thanks to amazing and cheap miniatures made by Mantic!

The first troop I was involved with painting was a Skeleton unit. Actually, the first Mantic model I ever painted was just a Skeleton, which is now the Champion of the Horde I'm talking about.

I arrived second in the Golden Orcy contest, but I discovered a good feeling about these walking bones and, miniature by miniature, I've completed the entire unit (and I'm working for finishing a second horde...).

For painting my skeleton (and the whole army too), I've chosen a very

bright color scheme, since it's complementary to my painting technique, with the use of a lot of white for highlighting. The main color is the purple, with red, white and brown as complementary. One of the most characterizing thing is of course represented by the "glowing eyes and blades", made with a bright teal. These color are a little inspired by Warcraft's undead, I have to admit!

Now, this unit always come with me on battlefields. I can't start making an army list without giving it the first place, supported by a Necromancer of course.

In the end, one of the thing I love to do after finishing painting a unit is to provide it a proper hero. In this contest, I used my "Executioner", the Revenant King leading this Skeleton

Horde *(Pictured above)* He was the one who raised the skeletal corpses that make up the unit. It's an old toy I've found in my room, with just a few addition and a nice paintjob.

That's all, see you on next issue for the focus on another troop.

To see more pictures of Alex's models, be sure to visit www.WarGamesForum.it

Revenant Knights

By reVenAnt

This time I'm going to show you one of the best unit, both in game and from the miniature point of view, which took part in the Undead army list.

I'm talking about Revenant Knights: heavy and fast enough, not that expensive, but always a menace for enemies with their charge!

As you might have seen in the previous issue, in which I've shown some shots of a Skeleton Horde, my color scheme is always bright and purple themed, although undead horses have received a bloody painting on their flesh exposed parts, and a few on their bones too.

One of the models that took me more time was of course the standard bearer, on which banner I've freehanded a sort of ethereal horse, while on the other side of the flag there's the classic Undead logo designed by Mantic Games.

You might recognize one of the more characterizing and recognizable effect of the paintjob, the teal paint that has been used on knights and horses eyes, and of course on weapons too. In combination with the Skeleton Horde, this is a unit that cannot be not deployed in every battle...

The unit is completely made from the Mantic Games Revenant Knights kit, very good sculpt these, nothing to say! The only expectations are the tombstone and the champion's head. For making this model even more epic and eye-catching in the unit, I've made a little conversion and resculpt on his horses back legs, so that it seems a bit more dynamic.

Quoting a sentence I used in the last issue : "*One of the thing I love to make after finishing painting a unit, is to provide it a proper hero.*",

I hope you've like this article, see you soon on next issue of the fantastic Ironwatch!▪

-Alex "reVenAnt" Visentin
www.WarGamesForum.it

and so here we have another scratch-built character.

The hero I've chosen to realize this time is one of those who, although on foot and not on a steed, is almost fast enough to compare his speed with Revenant Knights ones. I'm talking about the Vampire, introduced for the first time in Kings of War 2011 edition rulebook.

Once again, one of the childhood toys was good enough as a base for a conversion. So, starting form the Mighty Max Skull Master, only replacing the weapon, adding a second sword and making a proper base, I've got my Vampire. Still no name for him, his story has to be written on battlefields, maybe with the campaign rules you'll find in the new Kings of War rulebook!

KINGS OF WAR RANDOM EVENTS CARDS

By Stuart Smith

My gaming group have been using Random Event cards for quite a number of years now fighting our way through Arthurian Wars with 10mm figures, battling the English Civil Wars in 6mm or having six gun shootouts in 28mm. Random Event Cards always add extra spice, an enjoyable bit of an unknown quality to a game.

These Kings of War Random Event Cards have been designed to fit in with any game or scenario adding an element of surprise to even a straight forward 'Kill' battle. There is a chance of course that the cards dealt to you may unbalance a game unfairly in favour of one side but then when was war ever fair and balanced? Just enjoy the challenge.

To use the cards simple shuffle them and deal (usually) one card to each player before the start of the game. The information on the cards let you know when it is best to use them. We have used Random Event Cards in one on one games but also in big multi-player battles, all to great effect. I hope you enjoy using the cards and of course once you have used the cards a few times you may wish to invent your own cards; just be sure to share your ideas with us all here at Ironwatch!▪

CALTROPS, p64

Mark out an area 6”x6” within your own deployment area (during deployment). Cavalry and Large Cavalry treat this area as Dangerous Terrain, all others treat as Difficult Terrain.

VETERANS

Add +1 to the Nerve values of any one of your units.

INSPIRING

Select one of your units which now becomes Inspiring to itself only.

MERCENARIES

Your force is enlarged by the hiring of a troop of Ogre Mercenaries.

	Sp	Me	Ra	De	At	Ne
3x Ogres	5	3+	-	5+	9	12/14

Special Rules: Crushing Str:1

BLANK

But keep this card face down to worry your enemy.

MERCENARY HERO

Your force is enlarged by the hiring of a Human Mercenary Hero.

	Sp	Me	Ra	De	At	Ne
Hero	5	3+	-	5+	3	10/12

Special Rules: Crushing Str:1, Individual

OUT OF AMMO

Play this card on any one enemy unit. After it’s next turn of missile fire it is deemed out of ammo for the rest of the game.

HEALING POTION
ONE USE ONLY

One unit may restore 2xd3 hits when this card is used. Note that a unit may not be restored to Nerve values greater than it’s original values.

WISE TATICIAN

You may choose to deploy last, after all other forces have deployed, including enemy units with the ‘Vanguard’ special rule.

BLADE OF SLASHING

Add this magical weapon to one of your characters/heroes which gain one extra dice when attacking in melee.

DANGEROUS TERRAIN Play this card at the very start of your first turn of the game. You can now designate one area of terrain on the board as Dangerous Terrain as per the rules on p.52 of the main rulebook.	BUNCH OF COWARDS Play this card against any one enemy unit and its Nerve values are reduced by 1 for the rest of the game.
QUICK THINKING You gain a +1 or -1 bonus (your choice) to the dice throw for who goes first as described on p.47 of the main rulebook.	LUCKY DEVIL (RE-THROW) This card allows you to re-throw one dice throw (including all of one set of melee dice for example) at any point in the game.
BREW OF HASTE One of your units counts as just having drank deeply of a Brew of Haste thus increasing its movement rate by 1" for the rest of the game.	QUICK FIRE One of your missile armed units (not Individuals or Artillery) may fire twice on the turn that this card is played as long as they are stationary (on Hold) this turn.
CURSE Play this card against one enemy unit, that unit has -1 to hit on all melee attacks on the turn the card is played.	HEALING POTION ONE USE ONLY One unit may restore 2xd3 hits when this card is used. Note that a unit may not be restored to Nerve values greater than its original values.
CONFUSION Play this card on any <u>one</u> enemy unit at the start of its turn and it must be on 'HOLD' orders, the chosen unit may not move or fire this turn.	BLANK But keep this card face down to worry your enemy.

And Now a Word From Our Sponsors

By Michael Grey

"And welcome back to this Confederacy Cup match up between the Oorte Cloud Raiders and the Ikean Flat Packers. The game stands at 5-3 to the Raiders, with the Flat Packers struggling to hold on. You're with Gerry Arnholt and myself, Tom Phelps. Gerry, this is turning in one heck of a game here, wouldn't you say?"

"You got that right, Tom. Remember; we're in playoff season here, and whoever loses this one is gone. And in the case of the Raiders, that could mean forever with them being the only team to be a legitimised pirate crew. I don't think the fans of these particular marauders would welcome their team back if they lose to the Ikeanese."

"Whoa there Gerry! I should point out here that those were Gerry's own, personal opinions and do not reflect those of the Dread League, Channel 799, Ropa Cola or, er, me."

"Just expressing the word on the street there, Tom, no need to start sweating. Ha, ha."

"Ha, ha indeed Gerry. But enough of that, the players are back on the field, and blow me if the glass on the booth here isn't rattling with the howl of the crowd!"

"That's right, Gerry. It's a sell-out crowd tonight of 250,000 at the Draconis Dome. The only stadium which would allow the fans of alleged pirates which follow an alleged pirate team in, even though all alleged cases were dropped against them."

"It truly is a sight to behold, Tom. Let's go down to our friendly Judwan on the spot, Abe, for more on the mood on the pitch. Abe?"

"We Have Been Over This On More Than One Occasion, Gerald. My Proper Name Is AbuyB'drjjidgbag-"

By Boris Samec

"We know that, Abe, but unless we want to go to commercial we'll stick with Abe."

"Even So, I Would Like It Noted-"

"Mind on the job, good buddy."

"Yes, Well. Unfortunately Due To The Woeful Inadequacy Of Your Language I Will Have To Settle For 'Tense' To Describe The Feeling On The Field. The Stress Is Beginning To Show With The Coaches Also. I Asked Coach Martin Of The Flat Packers How He Would Come Back From Being Behind For A Full Quarter. He Suggested I Leave And Fornicate Myself With A Stick. A Most Vulgar Man I-"

"We'll have to leave you there Abe, because the players are taking their places ready for play."

"I'll say it again, Tom; looking at them side by side I don't know how the Ikeanese can hold their own against these marauders. The humans must want this game bad just to be trailing by one at this point."

"That's right, Gerry. The Flat Packers are obviously still haunted from just missing out on the finals last year, and the players and fans are out for blood."

Unfortunately Due To The Woeful Inadequacy Of Your Language I Will Have To Settle For 'Tense' To Describe The Feeling On The Field.

"And the players are in position, with the two line backers eyeing each other over the centre circle. Up steps the referee, out fires the ball and play begin-Oh! Well, you did say the fans wanted blood, Gerry, but I think they would have preferred some of the Raider's."

"Too right, Tom. That right there is a perfect example of why it's not just the players who have to be quick on their feet. But the ball's in play as the medics drag the body off and a replacement referee runs out."

Marauder Greenmoon Smashers, By Mantic Games
Used with Permission

"And he's going to be needed, Gerry. That ball is being passed from one Ikeanese hand to another like its red hot. The Flat Packers are sticking to their plan of fast hands which has seen them cling to this game by a knife

edge."

"It really is beautiful Dreadball, Tom. But for all their speed, the humans still can't get by the Raider's defence. They're going to have to take some chances if they're going to score before the break."

"He jinks left! Dodges right! Back left, and- Oooh..."

"That's an unexpectedly creative approach to the rules there, Gerry."

"It looks like they heard you down on the pitch, Gerry. Frank *'Handlebar'* Tolson is making a break for an opening in the Raider's line, and- Ooh! He slides off number nine, Grocth *'The Knife',* as if he's covered in butter."

"Nice simile, Tom. And Tolson is still up and running. He shimmies between numbers 17 and 20, Dok '*Forceps'* and '*Driver*' Robb'n. Some quick feet there, and now he's in the open field! He's got the ball, with only Grabber '*Grab*' Grabson between him and the goal! He jinks left! Dodges right! Back left, and- Oooh..."

"That's an unexpectedly creative approach to the rules there, Gerry."

"That's right, Tom. The book says to keep contact below the neck, but that applies to the plane of the physical body rather than

Jonathan Gabriel MVP, By Mantic Games
Used with Permission

the planet's lateral sphere. Holding a player upside down by the ankles and using his head as a punch bag still constitutes a penalty."

"That's a good point, Gerry, and one I think Grabson will remember as the referee blows

"John Doe" MVP green sculpt, By Mantic Games
Used with Permission

his whistle for the break."

"Both teams head for the tunnel with their heads held high. It's three to five for the Oorte Cloud Raiders, but the Ikean Flat Packers are still very much in the game. We'll talk more on this after these messa-"

**click **

hsssssssss
"...the only cream guaranteed to regrow limbs..."

click
crackhsssss

"...one of these days Alice; Bang! Zoom! Straight to the moon!"

"Which moon?"

"I dunno... Titan!"

hsssssssss

"...nd welcome back! That was some half time show, right Tom?"

"You got that right, Gerry. Those stripper bots were really grinding those poles."

"Yes they were. Of course it helps when you have an industrial grinder for a parent."

"And that roar your hearing is the crowd as the teams come out of the tunnel. Let's go back to our Judwan on the spot, Abe. Abe; what have you got for us, good buddy?"

"You Know, I Do Believe Sometimes You Place A Further Inflection On My Name Which Denigrates Me Even Further Than Your Refusal To Use my Full Title. Furtherm-"

"Time's a factor here, Abe."

Holding a player upside down by the ankles and using his head as a punch bag still constitutes a penalty.

"Yes, Well. I Believe It Is Safe To Assume Both Teams Believe They Can Still Win This Brutally Under-Evolved Contest Of

Appendage Sizing. I Attempted To Speak To Coach Hrakk Of The Oorte Cloud Raiders, However He Insisted I Leave Him Alone In No Uncertain Terms, And Continued To Question Both My Maternal And Paternal Parentage. The Frightful Beast Did Not Even Allow Me To Explain That My Kind Do Not Have Parents In The Normal Sense, Rather We Are Spawned From A Clutch Of Three Females And Then The Eggs Are Fertilised By All The Males In The Tribe, Thus Taking Full Advantage Of The Genet-"

"Whoa there, Abe. It's a little early in the evening to go into that. Children are still watching, buddy."

"And there's no time anyway as the players once more take their positions."

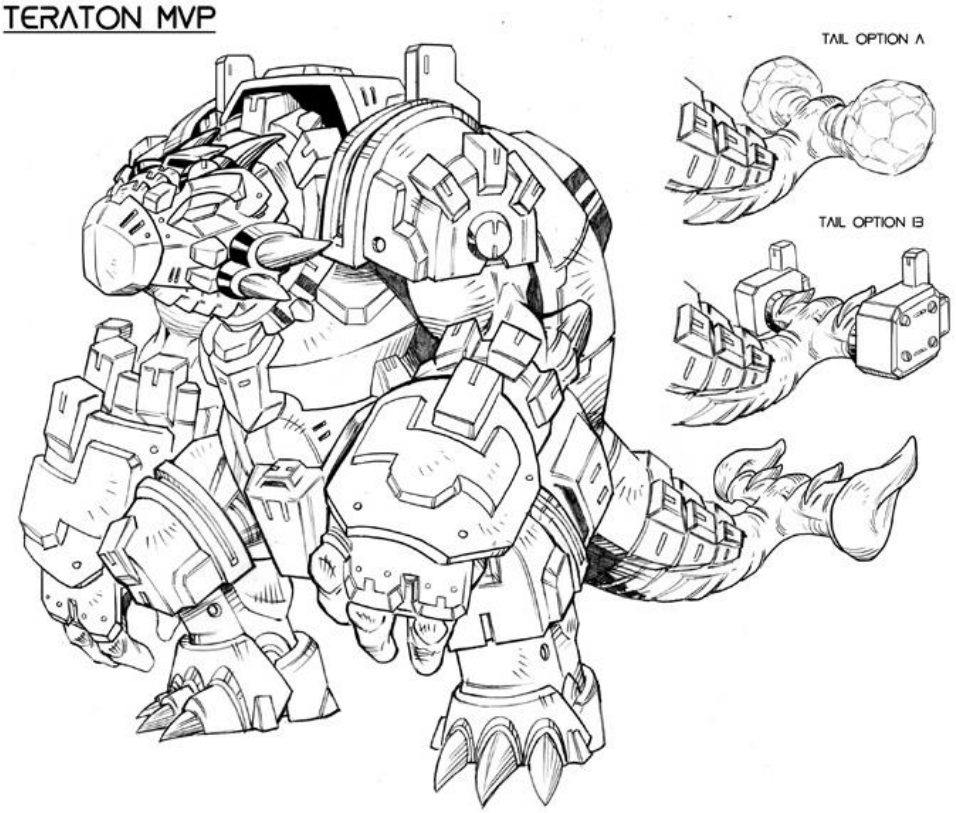
"You're on the ball Gerry, and it looks like the replacement referee learned from his predecessor's mistakes and has stepped a few metres back before the ball fires out, and game on! There's no clear winner as the contested ball skids between hands, rolling free, and is picked up by the Flat Packer's number 18, Lance '*The Mower*' Phimmel!"

"That was a demonstration of sure hands there, Tom, and it looks like Phimmel is breaking from the Flat Packer's tactics which have seen them this far, and is going in solo."

"You have to wonder at the wisdom of that, Gerry. The smallest marauder on the Raider's team has a clear 50 kilos on Phimmel."

I Believe It Is Safe To Assume Both Teams Believe They Can Still Win This Brutally Under-Evolved Contest Of Appendage Sizing.

"That's a point to remember, Tom, but I think Phimmel's forgotten or just plain doesn't care, as he picks out the Raider's biggest player, Hokk '*The Hammer*', and makes a bee line straight for him."



Teraton MVP, By Mantic Games
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Skittersneak Stealers, By Mantic Games
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"Hokk holds the season record for dismemberments, Gerry. I can't see this ending well for Phimmel."

"I don't think he's heard you, Tom. Phimmel's picking up speed, and Hokk's cracking his knuckles in expectation."

"I don't know if I can watch another one of these, Gerry."

"I'm with you, buddy, but wait! Phimmel's gone into a slide! He's on the ground, feet first, straight under *The Hammer's* grab and between his legs! Phimmel completes the slide and is up and running behind the Raider's defence!"

"That was one ballsy move, Gerry. Luckily for Phimmel it worked, and look at *The Hammer*! He followed Phimmel all the way through his legs until he fell literally head over heels!"

"I suppose it's true what they say, Tom; the hammer's not the sharpest tool in the box."
"Ha ha, good one Gerry. Phimmel's in the open, with no one to stop him! Surely he can't miss from this range... Goal! It's 4-4! Phimmel puts the Flat Packers back into the game!"

"Is that a cruiser taking off or is that the crowd, Tom? The Flat Packer's fans have gone wild!"

"That's right, Tom. The Ikeanese end of the stadium has erupted, and it's all play for with just four rushes left."

"And unfortunately we have to leave Channel 799 now. The Flat Packer's held out much longer than we expected, right Gerry?"

"You're not wrong there, Tom. Join us on Channel 800 to continue watching what will surely be one of the matches of this season.

Next up on Channel 799; ‘Days of Our Lives’. Can Ridge and Bridge-bot patch things up… again? Stay tuned to find out.”

click

hsssssssss▪

Trontek 49ers and Convict MVP,
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Tân-y-loar

By Matt Gilbert

"THANK YOU CHILD. An old man like me likes simple comforts."

"And here's your blanket Ur-pa."

"You are a good girl. Now, it's nearly the hour of the Wolf. The light is failing and you should be in your bed before the People come for you. Now don't giggle girl, the People are not some childish fancy. They are real. They are dangerous. I have seen them."

"Is that what they look like Ur-pa? They look strange. They don't look real".

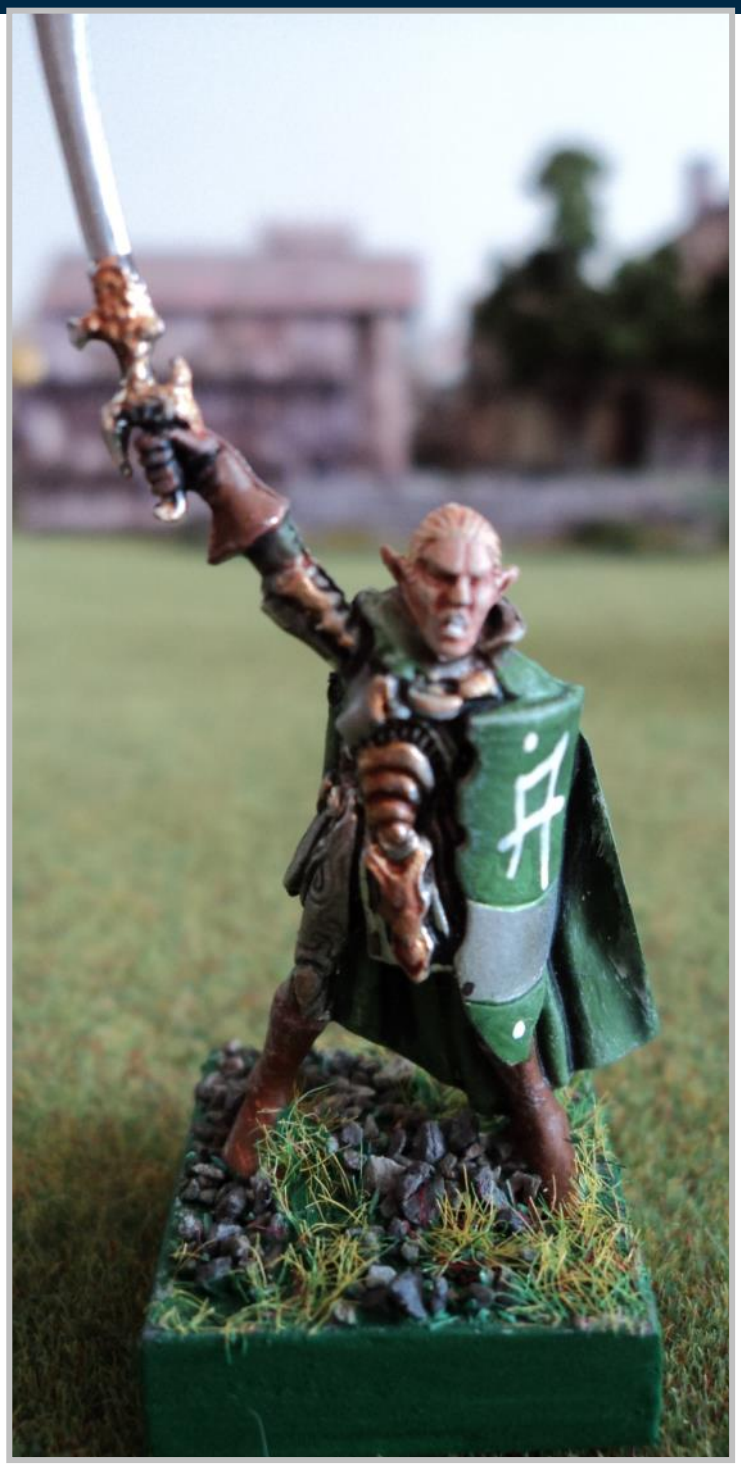
"They are real enough my dear and yes, that carving on the wall there is a good likeness. Yes, take it down and hold it in your hands. That's it, careful now. See how lovingly the figure has been carved from the wood. Close your eyes. Can you feel it? It feels alive, like the carving has sustained the wood and life still flows through its core."

"How do you know about the Faery People Ur-pa? You've never left the village".

"Ho ho, child you are too young to remember. Before even your father was born, I was one of our village's Trakken, tasked with guarding the annual caravans plying the trade routes between the great plains here out to Galahir and into Letharac. One year I even went so far South as Primantor on the shore and took a ship – a ship! Such a sight you've never seen and the sea – I've never seen so much water. But that is another story. We have a little time and you are old enough to stay up a while longer. So settle down and I'll tell you how it is I have seen the Fey."

THE AIR WAS cooling. Even under the trees where the temperature was reduced due to the shade, we could feel the turning of the seasons; the heat and wetness of the summer yielding to the drier, more tepid

By "Maccwar"



By Michael DeFranco

climate of the fall and the inevitable chill of winter. The visual cues were there too; the colors of the forest beginning their transition and the odd leaf here and there, drifting down to the floor to be lost amongst the roots and undergrowth. What was a canvas of green when we had arrived eight weeks previously was slowly transforming into what I knew would soon be a riot of browns, oranges, yellows and reds. I had seen the forest like it once before when I was just a boy. It is a beautiful sight to behold.

We had been delayed. The caravan Master Per Vortlek had dallied too long we felt, haggling over the value of the Ox-hides we had bought with us in exchange for iron pots and tools. The Master wanted unmade iron too in the bargain, knowing the Smiths out on the plains were always in want of fresh supplies. The elves tolerate it you see but they consider it an unclean necessity. They are happy to trade it away for the right price. Per Vortlek was an unpleasant man, but he was good at his job, and fastidious in his negotiations, ensuring he got the best for his clients and his reputation. He did well that trip, so I believe he thought the delay was worthwhile.

I had seen the forest like it once before when I was just a boy. It is a beautiful sight to behold.

We finally left Ileutherin on a cool, clear morning. Vortlek's hired and permanent caravan guards took up their positions in the train and the order was given to roll out. My father was in charge of our wagons towards the front of the train and myself and two other's from the village had made the trip as the men entrusted with the village's wealth and goods. Once the train neared our village, we would break off and complete the last leg of the journey ourselves, trusting we knew the land and the risks travelling alone

entailed well enough.

By "imm0rtal reaper"

Two lithe elves had been assigned to us as an escort to see us safely through to the outskirts of the forest. The forest is a paradox: both wonderful and terrible. The maze of paths can be treacherous and lead the careless far astray. Without an escort it is a lucky man who easily finds his way through the trees. Even the widest trade routes, ploughed yearly by the traffic flow from the plains can deceive and mislead, taking the unwary deep into the darkest places. Deep into danger. They had been with us for two days, waiting impatiently to get moving but keeping themselves apart from our camp. Or at least as far apart as decorum permitted.

The forest is a paradox: both wonderful and terrible. The maze of paths can be treacherous and lead the careless far astray.

The elves spoke little to the men and never to me. I could only observe them from a distance. My father had dealt briefly with them in the past on previous trips, but this pair only conversed with Vortlek and then it seemed, only sparingly. Dressed in soft leathers that seemed to blend in and mimic the changing colors of the trees around them, they struck me as more a part of the forest than beings that dwelled within it. With long, slender bows lying across their backs, they eventually signaled for us to move out and without waiting for acknowledgement, struck out along either side of the path, leading the way.

As the wagons rolled out and began to pick up speed, Mok, a huge hulk of a man from the arid wastes to the South, hawked and spat into the undergrowth. "Haughty, skinny bastards." he sneered, "Bet they'd snap like the twigs they resemble in a fight. Think themselves too good for the likes of us". He glared ahead and began cleaning his nails with a dirty, wicked looking knife which appeared from somewhere inside his jerkin. He was a hired thug, selling his sword arm to Vortlek for the first time this year. He was distrustful, arrogant, aggressive and didn't tolerate weakness, but as some minor incidents had proved on the journey so far,

could handle himself in a fight and I suppose, if you are hiring muscle, that's all that matters.

My father glanced at me to keep quiet but Mok had irked me.

"We need them to help get us safely out of here" I said as I lead my horse alongside the train. "Besides, they've done you no harm. It is in their interests to see the trade caravans in and out the forest so providing an escort can only make sense."

"What makes you an expert, boy"? I remember the demeaning, goading emphasis on the last word just as clearly today as I heard it then. "You can't be any more than sixteen summers old, you young whelp. I bet I could snap you too with one hand".

You can't be any more than sixteen summers old, you young whelp. I bet I could snap you too with one hand

I felt a hand placed firmly on my shoulder. My father reached down from his seat in the wagon and shook his head. "Leave us Mok. Go and bother someone else. Perhaps you'd like to tell our guides up there what you really think of them?"

Mok scowled and spat again on the path in front of us, before stalking off along the line.

"Steer clear of that one boy. No point getting into trouble".

WE TRAVELLED SLOWLY for three days and it was clear our guides were getting irritated with the pace we were moving. They probably wanted to leave and be home as much as we did ourselves. I was glad they had accompanied us though, for the path we took through the trees was unfamiliar and lonely. Not another soul did we see during that time – just the colors of the vegetation to distract us from the monotony of the trek but after a while, even the majesty of the trees dwindled in our

By "Maccwar"

eyes as the path lazily rolled by under our column of trudging feet and creaking wheels. On the third evening, Per Vortlek called a halt as normal and the command rippled back down the line. My father pulled himself on to his plains-horse, a feisty and powerful piebald that would enjoy the freedom of the grassland once we finally left the forest behind us. He trotted up to the head of the train to confirm the situation and returned shortly calling out for us to make camp for the night.

Tolk was the older, almost of an age with my father. The two of them often talked fondly of times when they were children and the mischief they had shared in.

By Michael DeFranco

"We are close to the edge of the trees Eran. We settle here tonight and then can be a way clear of the forest edge before sunset tomorrow." He jumped down from the saddle and handed me his reins. "Here. Water the horses and then help Weasel build the fire. Tolk and I will prepare the food".

Weasel and Tolk were the village's other Trakken; skilled warriors and experienced scouts and guards. Tolk was the older, almost of an age with my father. The two of them often talked fondly of times when they were children and the mischief they had shared in. Weasel was younger, but still had at least five years on me and the scars to show it. His small pointed features and his knack of getting in and out of places he wasn't wanted had earned him his nickname from a very young age. I never found out his real name. He didn't talk much but was trusted well enough and fiercely loyal to the village. On a trade journey, where the village wealth was in your hands, such traits were essential. A village needs to know that the men who

will take what they have to sell and bring back what they purchased or bargained for will return no matter the odds. Life on the plains was harsh but trade sustained it and made it bearable, elevating the villages from their nomadic and tribal roots.

The mood in the camp was lifted that evening. The wagon drivers, guards and ancillary staff could all sense that this step of the journey was nearly over. The traipse through the forest had become monotonous but spirits were raised with the knowledge that we would soon spill out onto the plains, free from the forest in a place where we could feel the raw breeze on our faces – a feeling of liberty and the tug of home you can feel in your heart. Happy faces showed the glow of the campfires and at some point in the evening, after our supper, the singing started. We were an eclectic mix of cultures with songs to match. Each singer was increasingly well received and when Mok rumbled out a gruff yet surprisingly melodic ode from his homeland, even he received some cheers of encouragement such was the feeling of goodwill. As Mok finished his song there came from the furthest fire, a voice like none I had heard before, and rarely since. A second voice joined in and as the men around us fell silent, a hauntingly beautiful duet wrapped us in its gentle embrace. Tolk and my father closed their eyes and as I did too the music entered my mind and body, becoming an almost physical experience as images of ancient times and places, emotions and desires washed around me.

By "imm0rtal reaper"

Life on the plains was harsh but trade sustained it and made it bearable, elevating the villages from their nomadic and tribal roots

I don't know how long they sang for but our daydreams were harshly shattered when Mok snarled and, rising from where he sat alone, kicked at the pots at his feet, storming off into the dark of the woods and muttering under his breath. Perhaps he felt uncomfortable with what we had collectively experienced or perhaps his disdain for the elven singers eventually overcame his reverie but his reaction broke the spell and the singing faded into the night. Silence took

By "puggimer"

hold and gradually the fires were doused and the caravan settled down to sleep.

A cold, dewy day greeted us as we stirred at dawn. After a brief, cheerless breakfast, the caravan organized itself for the last leg of the journey and slowly lumbered into the wearisome pattern of the last few days. I remember little about the early hours, but at some point I was aware of something strange, something different. Others had felt it too, and up ahead I saw our guides casting furtive looks into the trees and at each other. I shivered. My father and one or two others down the line loosened the weapons in sheaths and slings. At the raise of a hand from the nearest elf, the caravan came to a halt. I could see nothing in the trees but the elves were looking West, and fingering their bows. As we sat there, the absence struck me. No sound. No sigh of wind, no rustle of leaves. No scurrying, no scrabbling, no song of any bird. The silence rang in my eardrums louder than sound it had replaced.

I had seen and heard of these foul abominations – the warped and mutated consequence of experimentation and twisted magic.

I saw the elves move split seconds before it crashed out the trees in front of them. I had seen and heard of these foul abominations – the warped and mutated consequence of experimentation and twisted magic. That mortals have conspired to willingly bring such grotesque monstrosities into the world defies belief. Born from the depths of the world and tempered with the fires of the Abyss, the huge, galloping, snarling and frenzied halfbreed thundered into the path and with one ferocious swing of its axe, cleaved the first elf cleanly in two. Not breaking stride, the fiend smashed into the closest wagon, stomping through the petrified driver the wood and the helpless horses and driving into our other guide who took a hefty blow and fell away. As wagon wood and bones shattered it let out an

almighty, sonorous, terrifying bellow. Fear gripped me then I'm not afraid to tell you. The sound that thing made as it tipped back its head and roared its challenge stirred something in me that was primeval: the terror of hunted prey, the despair of the weak and the hopelessness of flight.

Waiting but a heartbeat for a clear shot, he loosed an arrow which flew true and buried itself with a snap-crump deep into the flank of the beast

The caravan exploded into life. Guards from all around charged in with screams and war-cries in a multitude of tongues – united in a common cause and a common revulsion. The huge double-headed axe of the Abyssal monster chopped effortlessly left and right and its hooves stomped and lashed out at whatever the axe could not reach. The thing was a furious blur of fur and muscle, metal and blood. I saw three, four, five men cut down by vicious sweeps of that dreadful blade. As it turned I saw a hideous gaping wound down one flank which looked alive with an inner fire and, even in the brief glimpse I had, decayed and festering. Perhaps this is what had driven it mad – a mortal wound that was rotting its mind as well as its body. I'll never know for sure but after all these years, that is what I believe.

As I came to my senses and started to draw my own weapon, two things happened. Our second elf guide hauled his broken body into a sitting position and drew his bow. Waiting but a heartbeat for a clear shot, he loosed an arrow which flew true and buried itself with a snap-crump deep into the flank of the beast. It roared in pain and reared up in an attempt to locate its tormentor but then out of nowhere it seemed, came Mok.

Bellowing his own cry Mok swung his huge blade in a scything diagonal sweep. The beast barely raised its own parry in time, the two weapons meeting with a bone shuddering impact. The two of them exploded into a bewildering and brutal conflict and we watched amazed at the strength and skill Mok displayed as he matched the hacking and slashing of the Abyssal while still managing his own attacks and counters. They fought like Titans and time slowed as we watched in horrified fascination; Death prowled the scene, watching for a mistake, a weakness: so one

By "Maccwar"

might fall – as must surely happen.

The Abyssal made the error, overstretching with an arcing swipe. Mok dropped and rolled under the swinging blade and cut his own across the open, livid wound in the beast's side. The monster screamed and I covered my ears the sound was so painful – a cacophony of spite, anguish, pain and suffering. It instinctively lashed out with its front leg, the hoof smashing into Mok's helmet and crushing his face and skull. The big man crumpled to the ground, the strings of life severed; the violent animation which had consumed his body extinguished forever.

The monster screamed and I covered my ears the sound was so painful – a cacophony of spite, anguish, pain and suffering

A cry of despair rang out from the men and we all moved to fell the creature. But it seemed it had no stomach left or was too much in pain as it launched itself from the wreckage of the wagon and crashed through the man nearest to it as it made for the trees once more. The man stood no chance and was mercilessly cut down where he stood, the body trampled under the hammer blows of the beast's legs as it passed into the darkness. The numbness and shock hit me first but they rapidly dissolved into loathing and without thinking I kicked my horse into life and plunged into the forest after the creature.

"No Eran!" Tolk cried after me. "Stop, stop!"

The man had been my father.

END OF PART I▪

By Michael DeFranco

Magic in Mantica

By Doug Newton-Walters

Magic takes on many forms in Mantica. From the fiery conflagrations of the Dwarven Warsmiths to the icy touch of the minions of Winter, magic permeates the world.

The following is an expanded set of rules for magic in Kings of War. It adds more complexity and variety to the current magical rules and provides the ability to modify magic users in the Kings of War army lists.

Caster	Cost	Lores	Maximum Spells
Warsmith	75	Fire	1
Iron-caster*	85	Fire, Astromancy, Spirit	2
Mage-Queen	65	Fire, Astromancy, Spirit, Nature, Ice	3
Wizard**	20	Fire, Ice, Spirit, Nature, Astromancy	3
Necromancer	65	Spirit, Ice, Necromancy	3
Wiz	35	Nature, Ice, Fire	2
High Priestess of the Abyss	50	Fire, Astromancy, Spirit, Ice	3

**Iron-casters retain their Heal (1) for war machines.*
***Pick 3 Lores to select spells from.*

Advanced Wizardry

For the purposes of these rules, the following are the only units that can use them. Any other unit with magical abilities retains their standard rules. A unit may only take a spell once. The spells that follow are broken up into Lores and a caster may only take spells from the Lores indicated below.

Each of these units has had any Heal (n), Zap (n) and Breath Attack (n) special rule removed from their profile. Their cost has been adjusted accordingly. You may if you wish take the unaltered form of these units. However if you wish to give them new spells, you must use these costs and spell rules, even if a spell is worse than the standard version. This is the price of variety.

By "left64"

By "puggimer"

Casting Spells

You'll notice that not all of these spells are used in the shooting phase, leaving one wondering how many can be cast. For clarity, Heroes can cast up to one spell per phase. This is basically an extension of the current rules, where you can only make one shooting attack per turn. You may choose a different target for each spell cast.

Master Wizard 20 points

Some magic users become extremely powerful, hurling spells in quick succession.

You may purchase this upgrade for any of the listed units. If a unit has taken the Master Wizard upgrade they can cast up to two different spells per phase instead of one and increase their maximum spells by one.

Magic Focus 15 points

Many magic users wield a weapon attuned to their minds, using it to store magical energies and even spells.

Gain +1 Attack and Crushing Strength (1), or if the unit already has Crushing Strength, increase it by 1. You may purchase an additional spell (including one you already have) to put into the Focus. It may be cast once per game in addition to the normal number of spells you may cast.

Orcs

It's unusual for an orc to develop magical aptitude. They just aren't sophisticated enough. However there are those half casts born with the magical heritage of one parent that can draw on it in a limited fashion.

If you wish, you can upgrade a Flagger to a Half Cast. Half Casts lose their Inspiring rule and choose a single lore (not Necromancy) that they have access to. They may take a single spell at the cost indicated.

Necromancy

This vile art is the product of ceaseless experimentation. It is the unholy corruption of nature magic with spirit magic, channelling the life-giving energies of nature into the lifeless void of undeath. Where the undead walk nature withers and dies, its energies drained to feed their endless hunger.

Warsmiths

The few dwarfs capable of magic become warsmiths. Their fiery souls channel the flames of their goddess, giving them an

insight into smelting and industry second to none. Some warsmiths will take their fire magic to the battlefield, smashing their enemies to cinders with burning hammers, or razing regiments to the ground.

Notes

For spells that affect an enemy unit during their own turn, place the spell card next to the affected unit to help remind you.
You can place the number of re-rolls for Curse on the card to indicate to your opponent how many they will have to make.

By Boris Samec

Fire Lore

Fireball 25pts
Phase: Shoot
Fiery beams of energy shoot from the caster's hands, incinerating all in their path.
Roll 5 dice for this ranged attack rather than using the Attacks value of the unit. This attack has a range of 24", always hits on 4+ (regardless of modifiers) and is Piercing (1).

Burning Blade 15pts
Phase: Melee
Like the scream of a furnace the caster's weapon bursts explosively into flame.
Roll 1D6 when you activate the caster in the Melee phase but before making attacks. On a 3+ the caster gains 1 additional attack with the Blast (1D6+1) rule.

Flame Burst 25pts
Phase: Shoot
Roiling flame spews from the caster's mouth, sending the enemy shrieking in pain.
Roll 8 dice for this ranged attack rather than the Attacks value of the unit. This attack has a range of 12" and always hits on 4+, regardless of any modifier.

Molten Curse 30pts
Phase: Move
Cinders fly as the caster spits out a sulphurous curse, melting enemy weapons.
Roll 1D6 after issuing the caster orders. On a 3+ one enemy unit within 12" suffers -1 to damage on melee and ranged attacks until the beginning of your next turn.

Blazing Slag 30pts
Phase: Move
Unnatural heat infuses enemy armour, burning them as the caster's allies strike.
Roll 1d6 after issuing the caster orders. On a 3+, all attacks against one enemy unit within 12" gains +1 to Melee and Ranged damage

until the beginning of your next turn.

Ice Lore

Ice Gale 20pts
Phase: Melee
An unnatural sleet storm forces the enemy backwards.
Roll 1D6 at the end of your Melee Phase. On a 3+ one enemy unit within 12" is moved 1D6+1" away from the caster (maintaining facing).

Freeze 25pts
Phase: Shoot
Creeping ice grips the foe, freezing their blood and slowing their movements.
Roll 5 dice rather than using the unit's Attacks value. It has a range of 24", always hits on 4+ (ignoring modifiers) and reduces the target's Speed by 1 per die until your next turn.

Hailstorm 30pts
Phase: Shoot
Icicles of dark ice rain from the sky, impaling and tearing the foe apart.

By "Dusty"

Attacks value. It has a range of 12"-24", always hits on 4+ (ignoring modifiers) and is Piercing (1). You may target a unit you can't see, but you need 5+ to hit.

Hoar Frost 20pts
Phase: Melee
Blade-sharp crystals sprout around the caster's allies, impaling the advancing enemy.
Roll 1D6 at the end of your Melee Phase. On a 3+ one friendly unit within 12" counts as defending an obstacle from all directions until the beginning of your next turn.

Darkvoid 35pts
Phase: Move
All heat drains from the air, enveloping the enemy in a freezing darkness.
Roll 1D6 at the end of your Move Phase. On a 3+ one enemy unit within 24" receives an additional -1 to hit.

Astromancy Lore

Mirage 35pts
Phase: Shoot
The foe fights themselves in panic as ephemeral foes drift amongst them.
Roll 1 die rather than using the unit's attack value. On a 3+ one enemy unit within 12" inflicts 1D6 attacks on themselves in melee.

Witch Eye 20pts
Phase: Move
The caster's second sight grants their allies unearthly accuracy.
Roll 1D6 at the end of your Move Phase. On a 3+ one friendly unit within 6" receives the indirect fire rule until the beginning of your next turn.

Scry 25pts
Phase: Move
The future is laid bare before the caster, granting their allies uncanny luck.
Roll 5 dice at the end of your Move Phase. Each 4+ grants one friendly unit within 6" one re-roll to attack or damage in melee and at range until the beginning of your next turn. Choose after they roll.

Curse 25pts
Phase: Melee
A vile epithet flies from the caster's lips, sending the enemy reeling.
Roll 5 dice at the end of your Melee Phase. Each 4+ forces one enemy unit within 6" to re-roll one attack or damage roll in melee and at range until the beginning of your next turn. Choose after they roll.

Ether Bolt 30pts
Phase: Shoot
Starlight arcs down, drawn to the heavy armour of the foe.
Roll 1 die rather than using the unit's attack value. On a 4+ one enemy unit within 48" takes 1D6+1 hits. Only damage rolls that roll under the target's Defence cause damage.

Nature Lore

Heal 30pts
Phase: Shoot
Soothing energy fortifies the caster's allies, repairing their minds and bodies.
Roll 3 dice rather than using the Attacks value of the unit. This attack can only target friendly units (even in melee), has a range of 12", always hits on 4+ and each hit removes 1 point of damage.

Invigorate 25pts
Phase: Shoot
The vitality of the wild fills the troops, spurring them on.
Roll 4 dice rather than using the Attacks value of the unit. This may only target friendly units, has a range of 12", always hits on 4+ and each hit moves the unit straight forward 1" (an enemy unit touched is

By Michael DeFranco

By "left64"

Charged).

Wild Wrath 35pts
Phase: Melee
The forest's anger manifests as slashing roots and vines, tearing at the foe.
Roll 1D6 at the beginning of your Melee Phase. On a 3+ any enemy unit that moves within 6" of the caster counts as moving into a Living Forest until the beginning of your next turn.

Wolf's Fang 25pts
Phase: Melee
The primal force of the predator sends the caster's allies into a frenzy.
Roll 5 dice at the beginning of your Melee Phase. This may only target friendly units (even in melee), has a range of 6", always hits on 4+ and each hit grants the target 1 additional attack for that phase.

Hawk's Speed 20pts
Phase: Move
The caster instils their comrades with lightning fast avian reflexes.
Roll 1D6 when issuing the Caster orders. On a 3+ one friendly unit within 12" may perform a free Change Facing order and does not count as having Flanks or a Rear until the beginning of your next turn.

Spirit Lore

Soul Shrive 30pts
Phase: Shoot
Insubstantial blades cut through the enemy's soul.
Roll 3 dice rather than using the Attacks value of the unit. This attack has a range of 12" and each 4+ rolled inflicts 1 point of damage on the target, ignoring defence.

Drain 25pts
Phase: Melee
The enemy's fighting strength is drawn from their bodies.
Roll 5 dice at the end of your Melee Phase. Each 4+ removes one attack from an enemy unit within 6" until the beginning of your next turn.

Bolster 15pts
Phase: Melee
Allied spirits are boosted by the caster's power.
Roll 1D6 when issuing the Caster orders. On a 3+ one friendly unit within 12" causes a -1 modifier on any Nerve tests made against it until the beginning of your next turn. This is in addition to any other modifiers.

Shroud 35pts
Phase: Move
Allied troops are briefly concealed in the spirit realm.
Roll 1D6 when issuing the Caster orders. On a 3+ one friendly unit within 12" is removed from the table (leave a marker), returning to the same place at the beginning of your next turn, moving as little as possible.

Terrorize 25pts
Phase: Move
Soul-sapping energy cuts through the enemy, sending them running or killing them on the spot.
Roll 1D6 when issuing the Caster orders. On a 3+ roll a Nerve test on one enemy unit within 6". This is in addition to any Nerve tests it may have to make during the rest of the turn.

Necromancy Lore

Reanimate e 30pts
Phase: Shoot
Plants whither and animals die as the caster powers the corpses of the dead.
Roll 3 dice rather than using the Attacks value of the unit. This attack can only target friendly units (even in melee), has a range of 12", always hits on 4+ and each hit removes 1 point of damage.

Dark Surge 35pts
Phase: Shoot
The caster drives their minions forward by force of will.
Roll 8 dice rather than using the Attacks value of the unit. This may only target friendly Shambling units, has a range of 12" and each hit moves the unit straight forward 1" (an enemy unit touched is Charged).

Corpse Bomb 15pts
Phase: Melee
Concentrating corrupted energy in his minions, the caster causes them to explode, killing the enemy.
Roll 1D6 at the beginning of your Melee Phase. On a 3+ one friendly unit within 12" suffers 1D6 damage and inflicts the same number of Crushing Strength (1) hits on one enemy unit in melee with them.

Resurrection 40pts
Phase: Move
As the enemy are slaughtered the caster's power increases allowing him to create new forces on the battlefield.
Mark the caster for each enemy unit Routed within 12" (max 3). Roll 1D6 when issuing the Caster orders (using up all markers). 1 marker = 6+, 2 = 5+, 3 = 4+. Success creates a Skeleton Troop within 12" of the caster, which acts as normal.

By "Maccwar"

By "imm0rtal reaper"

Death Snare 25pts
Phase: Move
The enemy are attacked by the corpses of their own comrades as they fall to the ground.
Roll 1D6 when issuing the Caster orders. On a 3+ one enemy unit within 12" suffers an additional attack hitting on 5+ for each point of damage they suffer until the beginning of your next turn. Roll when the damage is caused.

Please see the following pages to find printable cards Doug has made for each of these spells and lores, so you have a quick reference during your own games! In addition, we've included blank spell cards for each of the lores, so you can make your own spells!▪

Fireball

Phase: Shoot

Fiery beams of energy shoot from the caster's hands, incinerating all in their path.

Roll 5 dice for this ranged attack rather than using the Attacks value of the unit. This attack has a range of 24", always hits on 4+ (regardless of modifiers) and is Piercing (1).

Burning Blade

Phase: Melee

Like the scream of a furnace the caster's weapon bursts explosively into flame.

Roll 1D6 when you activate the caster in the Melee phase but before making attacks. On a 3+ the caster gains 1 additiona attack with the Blast (1D6+1) rule.

Flame Burst

Phase: Shoot

Roiling flame spews from the caster's mouth, sending the enemy shrieking in pain.

Roll 8 dice for this ranged attack rather than the Attacks value of the unit. This attack has a range of 12" and always hits on 4+, regardless of any modifier.

Molten Curse

Phase: Move

Cinders fly as the caster spits out a sulphurous curse, melting enemy weapons.

Roll 1D6 after issuing the caster orders. On a 3+ one enemy unit within 12" suffers -1 to damage on melee and ranged attacks until the beginning of your next turn.

Blazing Stag

Phase: Move

Unnatural heat infuses enemy armour, burning them as the caster's allies strike.

Roll 1D6 after issuing the caster orders. On a 3+ all attacks against one enemy unit within 12" gains +1 to melee and ranged damage until the beginning of your next turn.

Ice Gale

Phase: Melee

An unnatural sleet storm forces the enemy backwards.

Roll 1D6 at the end of your Melee Phase. On a 3+ one enemy unit within 12" is moved 1D6+1" away from the caster (maintaining facing).

Freeze

Phase: Shoot

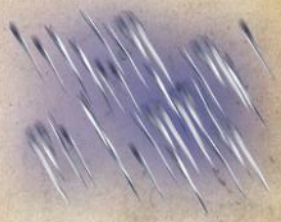
Creeping ice grips the foe, freezing their blood and slowing their movements.

Roll 5 dice rather than using the unit's Attacks value. It has a range of 24", always hits on 4+ (ignoring modifiers) and reduces the target's Speed by 1 per die until your next turn.

Hailstorm

Phase: Shoot

Icicles of dark ice rain from the sky, impaling and tearing the foe apart.



Roll 5 dice rather than using the unit's Attacks value. It has a range of 12"-24", always hits on 4+ (ignoring modifiers) and is Piercing (1). You may target a unit you can't see, but you need 5+ to hit.

Hoarfrost

Phase: Melee

Blade-sharp crystals sprout around the caster's allies, impaling the advancing enemy.

Roll 1D6 at the end of your Melee Phase. On a 3+ one friendly unit within 12" counts as defending an obstacle from all directions.until the beginning of your next turn.

Darkvoid

Phase: Move

All heat drains from the air, enveloping the enemy in a freezing darkness.

Roll 1D6 at the end of your Move Phase. On a 3+ one enemy unit within 24" receives an additional -1 to hit.

Mirage

Phase: Shoot

The foe fights themselves in panic as ephemeral foes drift amongst them.

Roll 1 die rather than using the unit's attack value. On a 3+ one enemy unit within 12" inflicts 1D6 attacks on themselves in melee.

Witch Eye

Phase: Move

The caster's second sight grants their allies unearthly accuracy.

Roll 1D6 at the end of your Move Phase. On a 3+ one friendly unit within 6" receives the indirect fire rule until the beginning of your next turn.

Scry

Phase: Move

The future is laid bare before the caster, granting their allies uncanny luck.

Roll 5 dice at the end of your Move Phase. Each 4+ grants one friendly unit within 6" one re-roll to attack or damage in melee and at range until the beginning of your next turn. Choose after they roll.

Curse

Phase: Melee

A vile epithet flies from the caster's lips, sending the enemy reeling.

Roll 5 dice at the end of your Melee Phase. Each 4+ forces one enemy unit within 6" to re-roll one attack or damage roll in melee and at range until the beginning of your next turn. Choose after they roll.

Ether Bolt

Phase: Shoot

Starlight arcs down, drawn to the heavy armour of the foe.

Roll 1 die rather than using the unit's attack value. On a 4+ one enemy unit within 48" takes 1D6+1 hits. Only damage rolls that roll UNDER the target's Defence cause damage.

Heal

Phase: Shoot

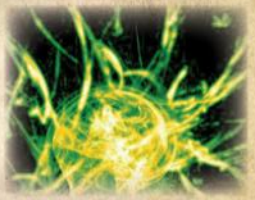
Soothing energy fortifies the caster's allies, repairing their minds and bodies.

Roll 3 dice rather than using the Attacks value of the unit. This attack can only target friendly units (even in melee), has a range of 12", always hits on 4+ and each hit removes 1 point of damage.

Invigorate

Phase: Shoot

The vitality of the wild fills the troops, spurring them on.



Roll 4 dice rather than using the Attacks value of the unit. This may only target friendly units, has a range of 12", always hits on 4+ and each hit moves the unit straight forward 1" (an enemy unit touched is Charged).

Wild Wrath

Phase: Melee

The forest's anger manifests as slashing roots and vines, tearing at the foe.

Roll 1D6 at the beginning of your Melee Phase. On a 3+ any enemy unit that moves within 6" of the caster counts as moving into a Living Forest until the beginning of your next turn.

Wolf's Fang

Phase: Melee

The primal force of the predator sends the caster's allies into a frenzy.

Roll 5 dice at the beginning of your Melee Phase. This may only target friendly units (even in melee), has a range of 6", always hits on 4+ and each hit grants the target 1 additional attack for that phase.

Hawk's Speed

Phase: Move

The caster instils their comrades with lightning fast avian reflexes.

Roll 1D6 when issuing the Caster orders. On a 3+ one friendly unit within 12" may perform a free Change Facing order and does not count as having Flanks or a Rear until the beginning of your next turn.

Soul Shrive

Phase: Shoot

Insubstantial blades cut through the enemy's soul.

Roll 3 dice rather than using the Attacks value of the unit. This attack has a range of 12" and each 4+ rolled inflicts 1 point of damage on the target, ignoring defence.

Drain

Phase: Melee

The enemy's fighting strength is drawn from their bodies.

Roll 5 dice at the end of your Melee Phase. Each 4+ removes one attack from an enemy unit within 6" until the beginning of your next turn.

Bolster

Phase: Melee

Allied spirits are boosted by the caster's power.

Roll 1D6 when issuing the Caster orders. On a 3+ one friendly unit within 12" causes a -1 modifier on any Nerve tests made against it until the beginning of your next turn. This is in addition to any other modifiers.

Shroud

Phase: Move

Allied troops are briefly concealed in the spirit realm.

Roll 1D6 when issuing the Caster orders. On a 3+ one friendly unit within 12" is removed from the table (leave a marker), returning to the same place at the beginning of your next turn, moving as little as possible.

Terrorise

Phase: Move

Soul-sapping energy cuts through the enemy, sending them running or killing them on the spot.

Roll 1D6 when issuing the Caster orders. On a 3+ roll a Nerve test on one enemy unit within 6". This is in addition to any Nerve tests it may have to make during the rest of the turn.

Reanimate

Phase: Shoot

Plants whither and animals die as the caster powers the corpses of the dead.

Roll 3 dice rather than using the Attacks value of the unit. This attack can only target friendly units (even in melee), has a range of 12", always hits on 4+ and each hit removes 1 point of damage.

Dark Surge

Phase: Shoot

The caster drives their minions forward by force of will.

Roll 8 dice rather than using the Attacks value of the unit. This may only target friendly Shambling units, has a range of 12" and each hit moves the unit straight forward 1" (an enemy unit touched is Charged).

Corpse Bomb

Phase: Melee

Concentrating corrupted energy in his minions, the caster causes them to explode, killing the enemy.

Roll 1D6 at the beginning of your Melee Phase. On a 3+ one friendly unit within 12" suffers 1D6 damage and inflicts the same number of Crushing Strength (1) hits on one enemy unit in melee with them.

Resurrection

Phase: Move

As the enemy are slaughtered the caster's power increases allowing him to create new forces on the battlefield.

Mark the caster for each enemy unit Routed within 12" (max 3). Roll 1D6 when issuing the Caster orders (using up all markers). 1 marker = 6+, 2 = 5+, 3 = 4+. Success creates a Skeleton Troop within 12" of the caster, which acts as normal.

Death Snare

Phase: Move

The enemy are attacked by the corpses of their own comrades as they fall to the ground.

Roll 1D6 when issuing the Caster orders. On a 3+ one enemy unit within 12" suffers an additional attack hitting on 5+ for each point of damage they suffer until the beginning of your next turn. Roll when the damage is caused.

Astromancy
Necromancy

Ice
Spirit
Nature
Fire

LAZARUS

by Michael Grey

It was already dark outside. Either his timing was out or the Ministry had diverted power from the Lowside's day cycle to the Upside for their hot tubs and flyers. Almost certainly the latter, though he was not one to trust in probabilities.

In the scheme of things, however, it did not matter. He left the store, stepping over detritus left by the latest drain backup as if it were full light. Gangs already populated the streets, drawn from their holes by the promise of darkness. He crossed to the road's middle, walking equilaterally between groups on either side, ignoring and in turn ignored. It was too early for them to a bother a lone man, even if he did carry bags of food. It would still be hours before the first shots rang through Lowside.

He reached his building, its side only slightly spattered with lit windows. The rest resident to those who couldn't afford the power, or were too stupid or too wasted to steal it. Home. For the present.

The lobby door was off the hook, giving the hookers a warmer place to wait for the next trick. One crooked a knotted finger at him, more exhausted than alluring. He walked past, ignoring the bones prominent on her shoulders and the damp patches on her shirt.

For the briefest of moments he considered reaching into his bag and giving her a can of beans or potted meat. Something to help. But it was only for a moment. It would be gone before he reached the apartment; pawned for another hit of whatever her particular poison was, and then she would follow him around like a spurned dog, waiting for the next kick.

No. He did not need the attention.

By Jonathan Hicks

The steps were climbed two at a time for nine flights, until he stood on his landing. As dark and dank as he left it that morning. Rust still ate through the welded wall sheets. The EMERGENCY EXIT sign sparked where an illegal hook-up bled power from the grid, its ozone mixing with the mildewed carpet to give this floor its particular odour.

Down the corridor, brown water compressing from the carpet where his boots trod, he paused just slightly halfway, leg mid-swing. To the casual observer it would barely be noticed, and he was on his way again within a beat.

While he was still three metres away the door unlocked in a solid clack with no external action from him, and swung open without the need to shift his hands from the grocery bags, swinging shut behind his heel.

The EMERGENCY EXIT sign sparked where an illegal hook-up bled power from the grid, its ozone mixing with the mildewed carpet to give this floor its particular odour.

Inside, the apartment was all dark shapes and grey outlines, benefiting only slightly from what halogens filtered through the lone window. He walked on surely, never brushing against the mouldy furniture, to the kitchen. The bags were placed on the counter and cupboards opened, all in a darkness most would find impossible.

By "Skolo"

"Hello, Lazarus," said a female voice.

"You're good," he said, still placing the cans according to food type. "Relocking the door would have been particularly complicated. And that was some nice work on the alarms, although you missed the tertiary. So, with all that I would have to guess…" he placed the last can from one bag and turned, leaning against the countertop and facing the woman. "Agency?"

She sat in the easy chair. The only one in the apartment. Low, its zigzag thread worn smooth on the seat and back, and angled to where the occupant could see the window and door simultaneously. The choice was tactical, and told him as much as her ability

By Boris Samec

to break past his alarms.

She nodded. "We have met, Agent Lazarus, although not in person."

He cocked his head, "Miss Dancer?"

She nodded again, short and precise, much like the rest of her. Her business suit was understated but immaculate, and her hair was pulled back to a strand-perfect bun. He could imagine her dusting the chair before she sat in it. "I apologise for disturbing your sabbatical, but I'm afraid something has come up."

"Something always does."

"I know you will appreciate just how important this is if we came for you. You are not the easiest person to find. You choose some interesting places for your safaris."

He kept his eyes on her the whole time, unblinking, gathering. She had remained still so far, legs crossed at the knee, fingers interlaced casually on her abdomen. Her body language gave off quiet confidence. But the signs were there; a tension across her lips as she spoke, the minor tick of a forefinger. She was nervous, and whatever she was here for was important enough to see him in person. And his augments said she was disconnected from the net. Interesting…

He looked out of the window where the evening's first gunshots began to pepper the night. "I like to keep things engaging. Act incorrectly and the Lowside can be as dangerous as any jungle. And I have to make myself scarce, otherwise someone always turns up to cut things short."

"*You* are a member of the Council Protection Agency, Lazarus. You are ours to call on as we need."

"Perhaps next time I'll find a nice quiet asteroid. That should keep you away for a while longer."

She was nervous, and whatever she was here for was important enough to see him in person.

"Agent you will listen, or would you prefer stasis containment until you remember your prerogatives?"

He looked at her, locking eyes until it was obvious she would not look away, and nodded.

"Good," she said. "Now, what do you know about Agent Caspar?"

His memory broke into action, retrieving the information as he spoke. "Caspar, Silus, M. Notional rank; Captain. Effective rank; Lieutenant Commander. Height; 186. Skin, hair and eye tone; variable. Last known sphere of operations; the Outer Perseus Arm. Mission aim; Classified."

"That is correct. Do you know Agent Caspar at all?"

"On a limited basis. We never worked together."

"Are you aware of his training and abilities?"

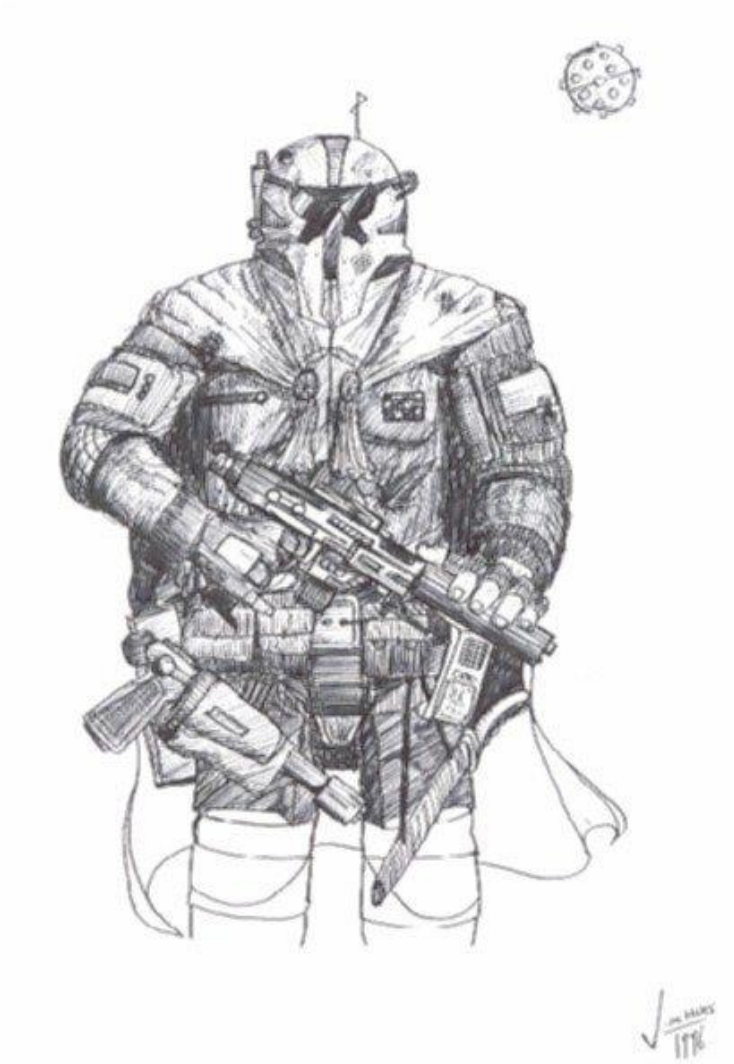
He paused, as much to run a search on his memory as wonder what she was getting at. "Only what's listed," he said eventually. "Why?"

"We need you to kill him."

And suddenly the net isolation was understandable.

"You want me to kill one of CPA's, one of our own, agents?"

"Hunt and kill, yes." His ocular vision sprung up with a handshake request from Miss Dancer, indicating she had files to share. "What you're receiving now is an order of



By Jonathan Hicks

magnitude above *top secret*, and I do not need to describe the penalties for divulging this information."

He accepted the handshake and his peripheral vision swam with overlapping images, documents and recordings. A cascade of data, too much for even him to take in in one glance. A word was made known to him, *Iapteus*. The mention of his triggered an awareness, like someone turning on the lights in a dark room. *Iapteus* was a security level, and it being known showed a ladder of similar codewords below; *Atlas, Prometheus, Astraeus*, all the way down to *Top Secret.*

His head rested in the centre of a round machine, the size and complexity of a super-collider cross section

The data stream brought with it some halting images. One was a pic file of someone he recognised as Agent Caspar, laying on a surgical slap, seemingly alive and unconcerned while his head rested in the centre of a round machine, the size and complexity of a super-collider cross section.

The second was a vid file. A tank, reinforced to hold the super heavy med gel it contained. Inside a shape, just on the other side of definable, floated, held static by tubes and wires. It shook once in a while, through the external stimulus of whatever the tubes brought or some reaction to its situation, Lazarus did not know. Although he suspected if it were the latter the image would take on a degree of the sinister.

His mind parsed the data and offered him a short prognosis, with a full report to go over later at leisure. He took the prognosis, read it, blinked, and looked questioningly at Dancer. She nodded.

By "Skolo"

"The project is so secret it does not even have a name." She noticed one of the chair's few remaining loose threads had attached itself to her sleeve. She pulled it free, held it to the light, then tossed it away, shaking her hand as if it might have contaminated her. "Its purpose was twofold. Firstly, for situations where an agent may need to be in two places at once, and for whatever

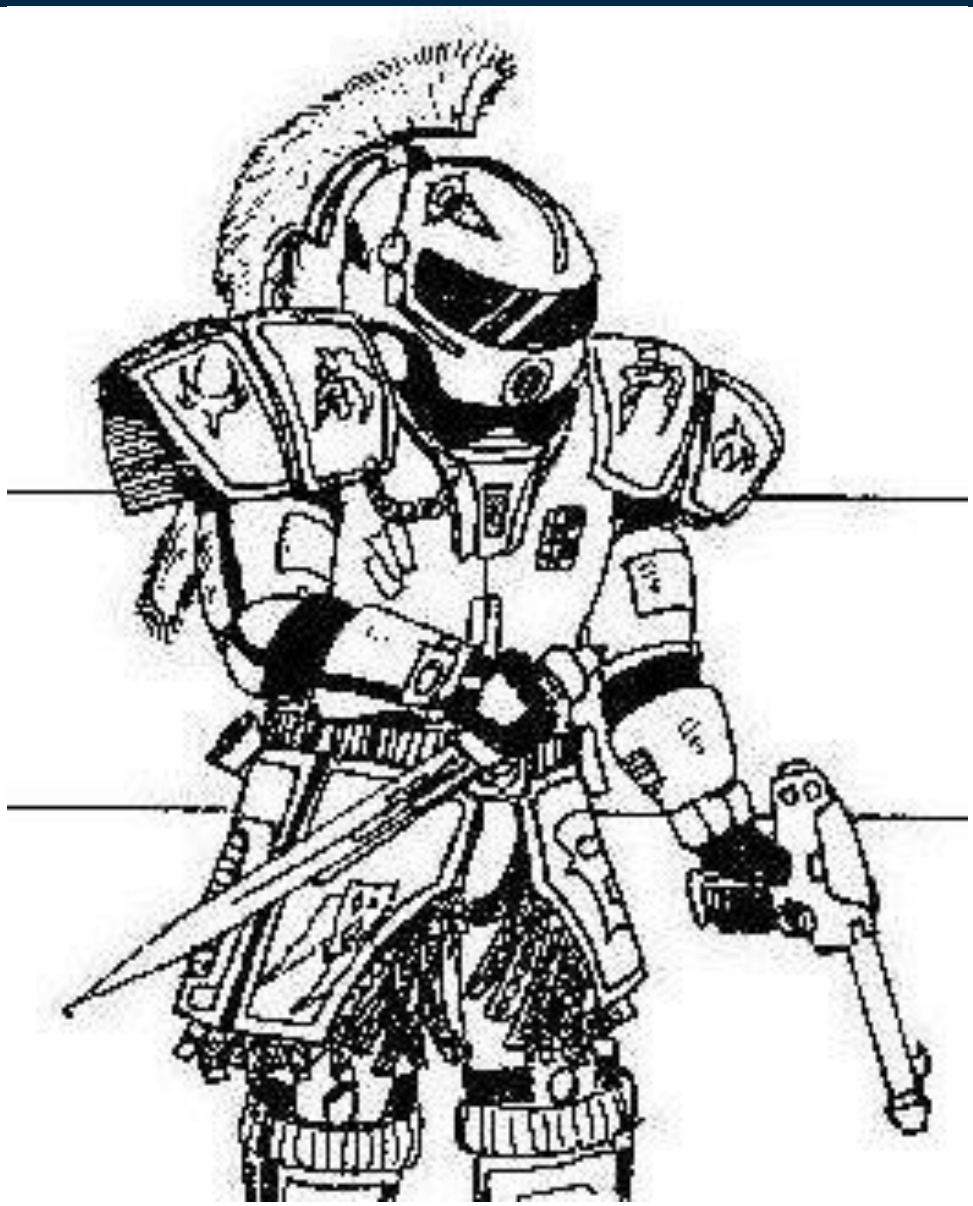
reason a gene-level disguised proxy would not be enough. Secondly, where the survival of an agent was assessed to be less than likely, and their replacement too costly."

"I understand. Is the copy implanted in the new body or the original?"

"The original mind state always resides in the original body, Agent Lazarus. It avoids any potential… errors to proliferate."

"Errors?" An eyebrow raised at the pause.

Miss Dancer's mouth curled in a smile which went nowhere near her eyes. "An outcome with the potential in an order of decimal magnitude so small I won't even bother to quote it. It is



By Jonathan Hicks

The original mind state always resides in the original body, Agent Lazarus

a relatively straightforward process, even if the science behind it is not. The subject's mind state is read and recorded. Every synapse, connection, memory, everything it contains and the way they speak to each other is copied and imprinted onto the blank mind of a body grown in a vat for just that purpose.

"Sometimes the new body is altered to fit operational requirements, such as changing an agent's ethnicity or gender, but it's usual practice to keep the host similar to the original to avoid possible body shock or degradation to and agent's skills."

"I could see how that could be useful. Why isn't it used more?"

"A few reasons. The foremost that it is not a cheap procedure, nor quick. Also the greater its use, the greater the possibility of its tech becoming known. Even the Forge

By "Skolo"

Fathers do not know this is possible. Lastly, if it became known that we were able to produce people at a whim, it would throw up some serious friction within the Sphere."

She let the sentence die. Lazarus sensed a frustrated teacher about her, and supplied the un-asked question.

"Because they're intelligent."

She nodded, another artificial smile his reward. "Some of the more libertarian societies in the Sphere would classify these assets as people, given that they are self aware and cognisant."

"And because you send them to live on a farm afterwards," he deadpanned.

She smiled again, this time chillingly sincere. "All assets are liquidated after operational realisation."

"Indeed," he said. "Are they aware of their impending reward?"

"Their very existence is on a need-to know basis-"

"And they don't need to know?"

"They are not people, Agent. They are briefed as if they are the original in a temporary body to reduce the risks of losing focus, and to ensure they return for 'debriefing'." The inverted commas dropped like tombstones into the sentence.

"Some may call that a tad ruthless, Miss Dancer."

"Our business is the safeguarding of the Sphere's continued future, Agent Lazarus. Not in being nice."

He accepted the reprimand with the minimal obeisance required. "And now you're here. Is it safe to assume a copy of Agent Caspar has absconded?"

"It's safe," she nodded. "Agent Caspar's Secondary, as they classification goes, did not report in five Terran cycles ago, and has failed to respond to further hails. Our intelligence shows the Secondary is still active and moving freely, and we can only assume it has not intention of returning. The target requires termination and all its

physical evidence destroyed before it can fall into another's hands."

Lazarus cocked his head slightly to see her from a different angle. "What are you not telling me, Miss Dancer?"

She shifted under his gaze. A less complimentary way to put it would be *squirmed under institutionalised embarrassment*.

She began slowly, "The reason we believe this occurred is because the Secondary's brain was not the same shape as Agent Caspar's original."

Lazarus blinked. "Excuse me?"

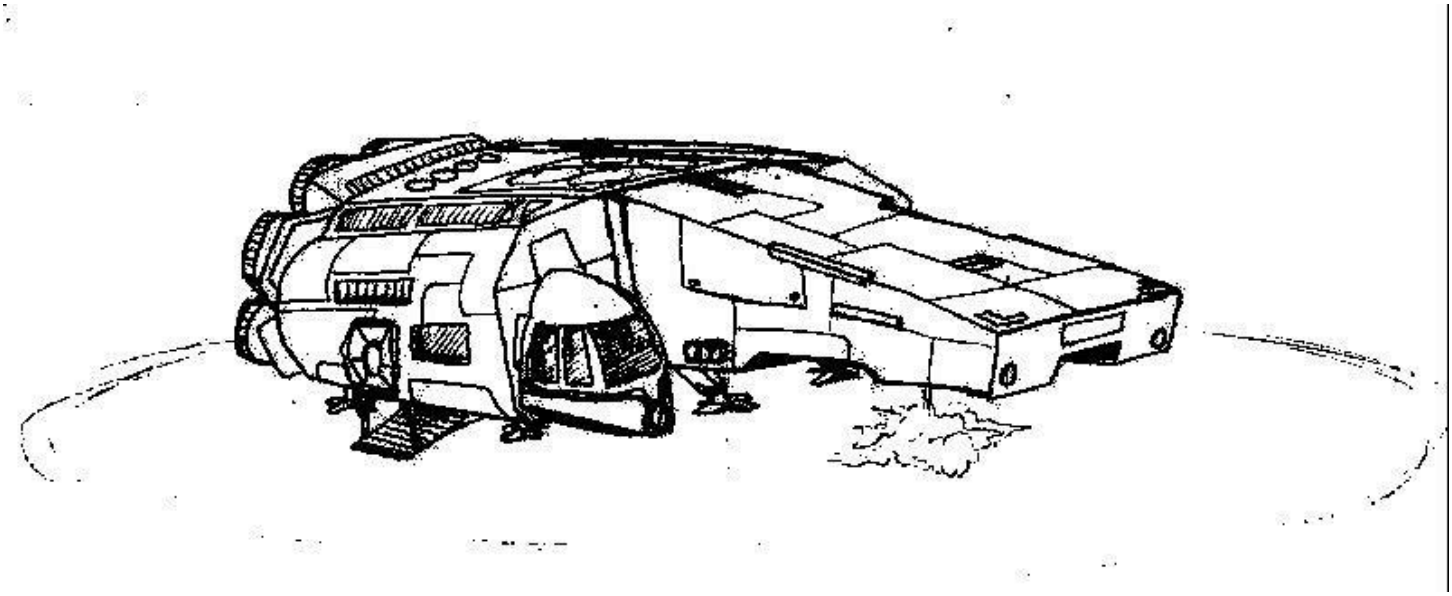
"Agent Caspar was assigned to investigate the tech leap in the Hydronas systems. The increase in their scientific understanding is hampering House Phrissure's attempts at integrating them into the Sphere. And this happening just as the Trade Fleet Orieum arrived cannot be mere coincidence."

The target requires termination and all its physical evidence destroyed before it can fall into another's hands

The system and the unexpected arrival from subspace of the Trading Fleet was well enough reported on, even in the civilian channels, that Lazarus did not have to access his archives to realise, "You copied him into a *Forge Father?*"

"*Imprinted* is the accepted nomenclature, but essentially yes."

Lazarus was uncharacteristically speechless. The idea that the Agency would try and infiltrate one of the secretive galactic societies. The face, the very gall, of an attempt to break into a civilisation whose every purpose spoke of a desire for a reason to wage war on the Sphere, and most likely wipe them out in the process, was frighteningly brazen.



By Jonathan Hicks

He was impressed.

"And how did Caspar take to being placed in a one point five metre body?"

"He went AWOL," she said evenly, "I think that tells us all we need to know. We're assuming the Secondary found out its true nature, either through its own deductions or, at the worst, *worst*, case scenario, the Forge Fathers know of the program and fed the information to foil the operation and spread further problems. If so, they succeeded."

By Boris Samec

"A little Forge Father version of Caspar running around. That would be funny were it not so serious."

Dancer gave him a further hint of teacher with another reprimanding look. "With what I have told you, and the information now in your files, I think you understand the situation's gravity."

He nodded, giving the news the solemnity it deserved, and then turned back to stocking the shelves, ignoring Dancer's indignity.

"Is this the time you ask if I have any other questions?" he said.

"I… yes."

"Is Caspar expected to have assets of his own in place? A support network? Caches?"

"He is. Agent Caspar is well known for his operational thoroughness. He is being debriefed as we speak for more details."

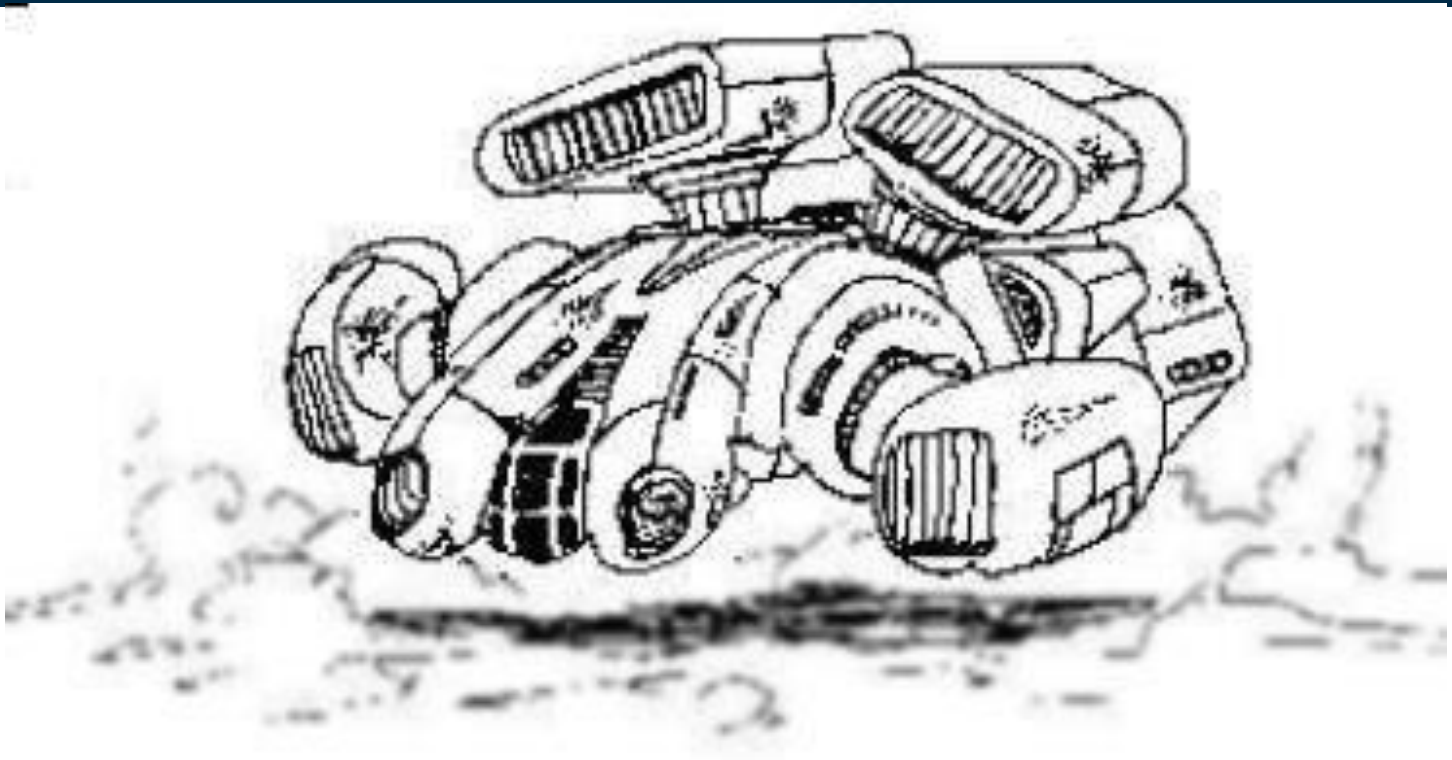
"So I would have to move quickly. One more question."

"Yes?"

And how did Caspar take to being placed in a one point five metre body?

"Have you always referred to us as *it*?"

Lazarus pulled the pistol, one of many secreted about the apartment, from the



By Jonathan Hicks

cupboard's false partition, turned, and fired.

The gun was a primitive thing, a chemically-projected slug fired down a rifled barrel. It was mechanically brutal, but effective; punching Dancer further into the chair's fabric.

He had time to appreciate the look on her face; incomprehension, to realisation, to shock, all within the time it took for his question to register and the shot to puncture her left breast, where a coin sized hole now leaked a red line down her tailored suite.

She still looked at him. Mouth open, working silently around a situation she could not accept was happening.

He fired again, this time into her forehead, snapping her neck back and nearly tipping the chair. By the time its legs found equilibrium and fell back, the cordite smell was beginning to fade and the report was long gone. Just another gunshot lost in the night.

Her eyes remained open, the shock of the last few seconds still evident on them as she stared eternally at the mottled ceiling. In any normal operation he would have closed them, a final act of respect for an honoured enemy. But her last comment was still raw in his mind, and they remained open.

The gun was a primitive thing, a chemically-projected slug fired down a rifled barrel.

Well well. Old Caspar had a Secondary. That was *interesting*.

He ran a quick inventory of the apartment while he checked to see what contacts he had in the Perseus arm. He would have to be quick. Miss Dancer

would soon be missed, and it would not be long before another agent would be on Caspar, and now his, trail.

But still, it would be worth it to bring another into the fold.

His subsystem finished the inventory. There was nothing in the apartment which would risk giving away who Dancer met with. The security would scream *Agency* but there was no time to take that apart.

He pocketed the pistol and went to leave, pausing at Dancer's body.

His augments told him she was dead, but still he felt her pulse. It paid to certain in these situations. And he really wasn't one to trust in probabilities.

The end▪

For more stories like this, visit Michael's blog at www.michaelgrey.com.au

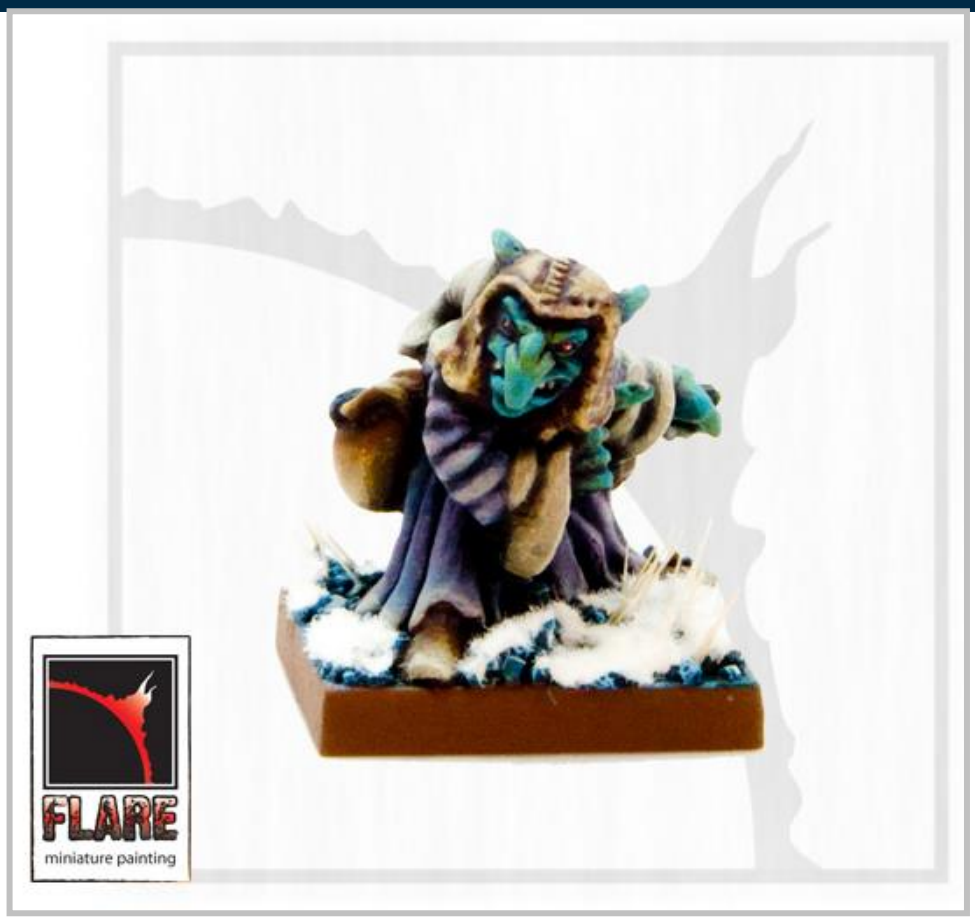
Deadzone Reb by Jamie O'Toole

By "Skolo"

The Keep in the Forest

A Tale from the Kings of War RPG

By Jonathan Hicks



By Darren Lysenko

The companions spread out in a line, not more than ten paces from each other, and descended into the valley. The town at the bottom had all but vanished; there were some traces of buildings, foundations of larger ones and rubble from others, but very little to suggest that a settlement once existed here. As they passed through there was evidence of a dried-up stream and the thick stone of a road running along the base of the valley. It had cracked and split as ferns and weeds pushed their way up into the light, and the roots of new trees had heaved the stones and rocks to one side. The wild had reclaimed the valley floor.

They then began the ascent up the other side of the valley. Although Tere had suggested patience he had also taken his shortbow from his shoulder and strung it, but had not notched an arrow.

When they were half way up the hill a cackle rang from the trees, a laugh that sounded like stones being dragged along a washboard. It was disconcerting and out of place in this area of beauty and nature, and the men grimaced, especially Grum who had obviously heard the sound before. He looked at Draybar and said, in as low a voice as possible, '*Goblins! Pass it on!*'

'Goblins, pass it on!'

'Goblins, pass it on!'

Knowing this, they readied their weapons.

As they ascended the hill the outline of the castle finally began to take shape. The trees had crowded about it, as if protecting it from the outside world, and the vines and weeds had covered the walls. It was a simple affair; there were four walls with a tower at each

corner and a keep rose from within, only slightly higher than the protecting walls. As the elf Eyanur and his brother Eyon had said, it wasn't a large place and the keep didn't reach higher than the tallest trees that surrounded it. The sun filtering through the canopy created a patchwork of light and shadow that covered the grey, bleak walls.

They were approaching it from the front and the great gate was closed, but it hardly mattered as to the right of the gate the wall had collapsed outwards, probably from neglect and wear. It wasn't a recent collapse as moss, vines and greenery had covered the mound. It appeared easy to traverse and one by one the men gathered on the outside of it.

By "Dusty"

The trail of smoke was winding its way into the air from just beyond this collapse but none of them could see the fire or if anything attended it. They all kept low and quiet as they came together.

'The fire in the courtyard will be a sentry,' the dwarf Grum said, obviously knowledgeable of these creatures. 'Probably one or two, depending on the size of the raiding party.'

The great gate was closed, but it hardly mattered as to the right of the gate the wall had collapsed outwards

'How do you know it's just a raiding party?' Tere enquired, his human eyes narrowed.

'Because if it was a warband this keep would be swarming with them and there'd be a lot more fires. Now, I'm thinking seven to ten of them, probably someone big in charge, so we take the sentries fast and quiet.'

Draybar, a human lady of barely twenty summers, hefted her crossbow. 'Shall we shoot them?'

Grum nodded. 'Indeed. You, Tere and Cuthred can move up…'

'Wait,' Cuthred, another man, hissed. 'You're not in charge.'

'Grum has dealt with goblins before, we'd be wise to listen,' Tere suggested.

'I agree,' Eyanur said. 'Grum?'

By Boris Samec

Grum briefly looked at Cuthred's grimace of displeasure, smiled and continued. 'If we take the sentries as fast as we can then get to the keep and get inside, take them by surprise. Goblins are easy one on one but when they're in a group they can be vicious, they'll try to swarm over you. If they do come out then spread out, try to keep them apart, don't let them group up too much. It'll be easier.'

Goblins are easy one on one but when they're in a group they can be vicious, they'll try to swarm over you

'Sounds like you have had a lot of experience,' Tere said to Grum as he readied his bow and took position with Cuthred and Draybar. Eyanur and Eyon waited just behind them, ready to follow them up and over the rubble after they had fired on the goblins.

'The War to the North lasted eight years. I fought in the army but I also travelled with scouts and skirmish parties trying to root goblins out on our flanks who were giving us trouble. Yes, I learned a lot.'

Tere nodded and was about to say something else when Cuthred snarled, 'Are you ready?'

'I am.'

'Okay. I'll count to three. One.'

They all took deep breaths and focused on the fight that would no doubt occur in the next few moments.

'Two.'

They pulled back on their bows. The wood creaked softly. Draybar licked her lips in anticipation.

'Three.'

As one they rose from the rubble to see two goblins stood at the campfire. They were green-skinned and hunched over, with bowed legs and long arms. Their armour was what they could scavenge from their victims, patches of chainmail, leather and even plate. Their weapons were notched and serrated axes and one of them had short throwing spears in a quiver over his shoulder. They were mumbling to each other, watching the sparks of the fire flicker and the smoke curl upwards.

With a thud two arrows lodged into the first goblin's chest, whilst Draybar's crossbow bolt took the second one in the throat. Without a scream of pain or a cry of warning the two creatures fell to the ground, dead.

Around this fire were nine goblins, all eating fresh uncooked meat and drinking filthy water

As quickly as they could the companions hurried down the other side of the collapsed wall and into the courtyard. It was strewn with debris and filth, the wood of buildings that would have been propped up on the inside of the walls obviously used to shore up the other walls or used as firewood. Like the outside it was overgrown and young trees sprang up here and there.

Directly across from them were the open main doors of the keep and they could see the light from another fire flickering inside. They ran quickly and quietly across and ran up the steps, weapons at the ready. When they reached the door they all came to a sudden, sliding halt.

Inside, the hall was empty apart from several rotting wooden benches piled up against the far wall behind the raised place where the master of the castle's seat would have been. In the centre of the hall was a small fire, and around this fire were nine goblins, all eating fresh uncooked meat and drinking filthy water.

But it was not the goblins the companions were staring at. On the opposite side of the fire was a huge figure, a creature so bulky in its armour that it must have easily towered ten feet. The armour was beaten metal, like someone had simply taken sheets of iron and nailed them onto the monster. The helmet was covered in horns, the shield that it now took up had a wicked spike protruding from the centre and the huge curved serrated sword it slowly raised in one hand would have been a two-handed weapon in the hands of a normal man. It stood to its full height, the firelight making it glow as if possessed, and it crashed through the fire, scattering burning wood and embers everywhere.

By Darren Lysenko

Grum took a step back, his hard face now twisted in shock and horror.

'*Giant!*' he roared, and ran back down the steps.

The men scrambled down the stairs. Tere and Cuthred both shot at the giant as it crashed through the hall, swatting goblins out of it's way in its efforts to get to them, but one arrow simply bounced off the armour and the other penetrated the metal but appeared to do very little.

They all headed back to the collapsed wall but Eyon slowed. 'What do we do?' he cried. 'We run!' Grum shouted as he started to ascend the rubble.

'But we have to clear this place…' Eyanur began, but he was cut off by a mighty bellow of rage.

The giant stood at the top of the steps, the table-sized shield and sword raised into the air as it roared its fury. Eyanur and Eyon looked at the retreating men, then at each other.

Then the elves readied their weapons and faced the giant as it stamped down the steps.

Tere watched the brothers stand shoulder to shoulder, one with sword raised the other with spear levelled, and he gritted his teeth. They seemed like children with toys in front of this huge black-armoured creature. Without truly thinking about what he was doing he dropped his bow, unsheathed his sword and unslung his shield from his back.

By Boris Samec

As he took position by the side of the brothers he heard Grum behind them crying out, '*You fools! What are you doing? Run!*

It stood to its full height, the firelight making it glow as if possessed, and it crashed through the fire

Run!'

But Tere didn't hear what he shouted after that. The giant was upon them.

With a huge, ear-shattering cry it bought the sword down in a huge overhead arc. They all dived out of the way and it buried itself

easily a foot deep into the hard ground, but the giant pulled it free with little effort. It then took a sideswipe at Tere first who was forced to dive to the floor to avoid it, and when the brothers stabbed at the creature with little effect it turned on them, batting Eyanur back and through the air with it's shield and thrusting at Eyon with the sword.

Eyanur crashed into the piled rotting wood stacked by the wall and it smashed and splintered. He cried out in pain and rolled to the ground. The giant ignored him and concentrated on Eyon who ducked and dived out of the way of the wildly swinging sword, which enraged the giant more and more.

It was then the goblins finally appeared at the top of the steps and, emboldened by the giant's actions, came screaming down to aid.

The first one found an arrow in his chest the second was shot through the eye by a bolt. The others faltered and slowed as Cuthred and Draybar reloaded their weapons, and Grum came sailing through the air with his axe chopping wildly. He felled another two goblins before they realised what was happening.

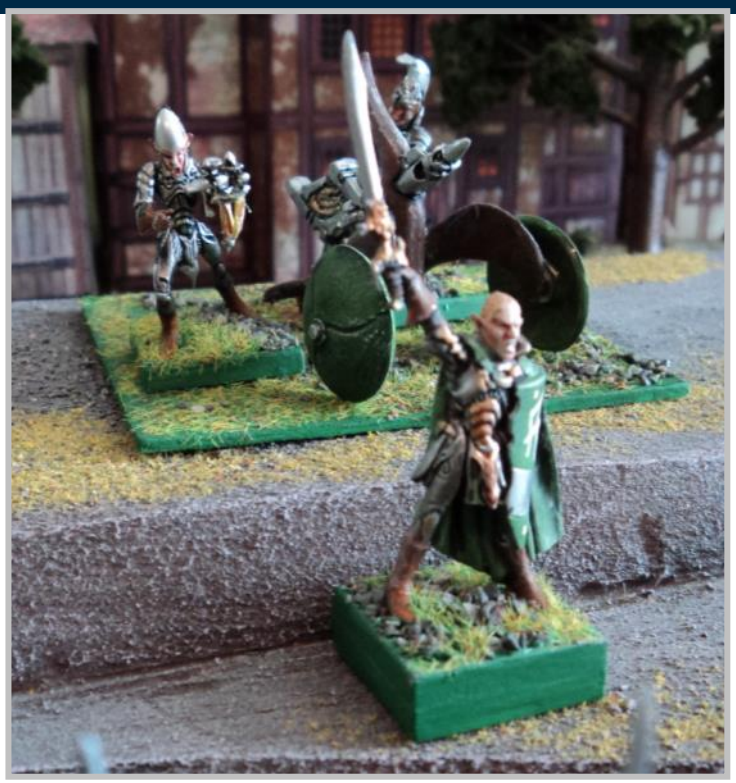
'Get up, you idiot!' Grum was shouting. 'Get up and run!'

'The brothers!' Tere shouted back, and gathered his wits enough to skewer another goblin running at him.

The goblins finally appeared at the top of the steps...
The first one found an arrow in his chest the second was shot through the eye by a bolt.

'They're dead!' Grum cried as he downed another one. An arrow punctured another. 'The giant will kill them!'

By "Maccwar"



By Michael DeFranco

Tere traded blows with one of the last two goblins whilst Grum faced off with the other. Tere glanced over to the giant as he fought and saw Eyon leading the monster away from his brother, jabbing the creature with his spear and shouting taunts. Eyanur was slowly getting to his feet.

‘We fought thousands of these monsters in the War to the North,’
‘Why do you think it went on for eight years?’

He finally hacked the creature to the ground as Grum finished his and turned to help the brothers, but Grum grabbed him by the arm. ‘Don’t! You’ll lose!’

‘We have to try!’

‘We fought thousands of these monsters in the War to the North,’ Grum growled. ‘Why do you think it went on for eight years? We have to run!’

Tere tore himself away. ‘Then run!’ he shouted angrily, directly in Grum’s face, and jumped over the bodies of the fallen goblins to get to the giant.

He dropped his shield and grabbed his sword in both hands and with a wild cry he leaped through the air and onto the back of the towering foe. Where the armour was tied together there was a narrow gap and the sword point slipped between it and into the giant.

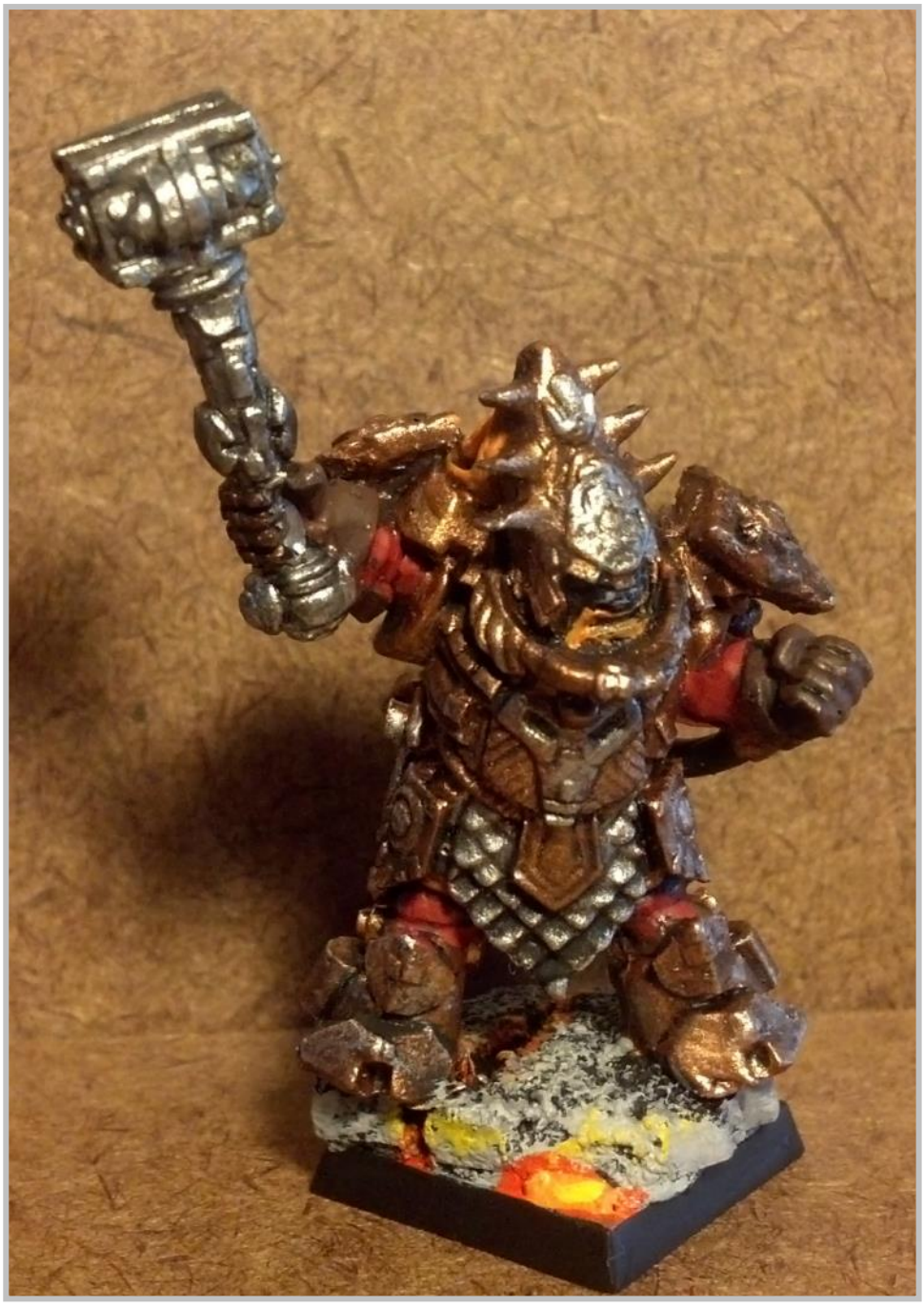
There was a gush of black blood from the pale-green monster and it’s bellows of fury turned suddenly into screams of pain. It staggered forward then backward, and it tried to reach around to swat Tere off, dropping the huge sword and shield. When it realised it couldn’t reach far enough behind it started to thrash wildly but Tere hung on, wrapping his legs around it and hanging onto the sword hilt with all his strength. An arrow bounced off its armour as Cuthred tried another shot, but a crossbow bolt from Draybar slammed through the armour and buried itself deep. The giant roared again.

Knowing that the creature was intent on ridding itself of the man on his back Eyon and Eyanur stepped in. They jammed their weapons in the gaps of the giant’s armour now that they could get clear strikes, and before long there was black ichor pouring from a dozen wounds. As the giant grew weaker they stood back and it sank to its knees, then fell to its face. With a wheeze it

exhaled it's last breath as Eyanur despatched it with a thrust to the neck.

Slowly Tere stood, black blood covering his armour and face, his sword dripping with it, his long hair matted and filthy. He stared at Grum and then the others, and any traces of the friendly, smiling man they had come to know on their brief journey was gone to be replaced by a glaring, almost maniacal stranger.

'*I do not run,*' he hissed.▪



By "puggimer"

Engineering Special Weapons Corps

By Doug Newton-Walters

Dwarven engineers have developed all manner of strange devices over the centuries, from Garak's famous Longiscope to Finella's terrifying Steam Weevil. However it is in the area of weapons construction that they excel and a special engineering section was created exclusively to develop more powerful weapons of war. It is from this engineering division that such infamous weapons as the Steel Behemoth and Battle Drill were produced.

In their attempt to create ever more portable and potent weapons the special division has produced what they call WMDs, or "weapons of messy destruction". Developed as part of the psychological warfare section, these weapons are intended to sow terror in the enemy ranks by rending their fellows apart in screaming puddles of gory mush.

Special Weapon Corps*

Large Infantry

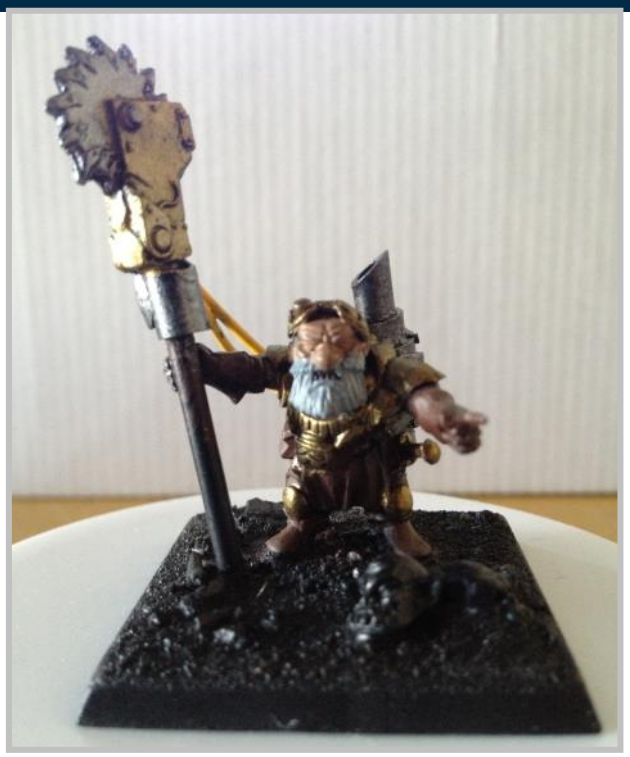
Size	Spd	Me	Rn	Def	At	Nv	Cost
Troop (3)	5	4+	-	5+	3D6	11/13	80
Regiment (6)	5	4+	-	5+	6D6	12/14	145
Special:	Crushing Strength (1), Horrifying Weaponry (treat as Musician)						

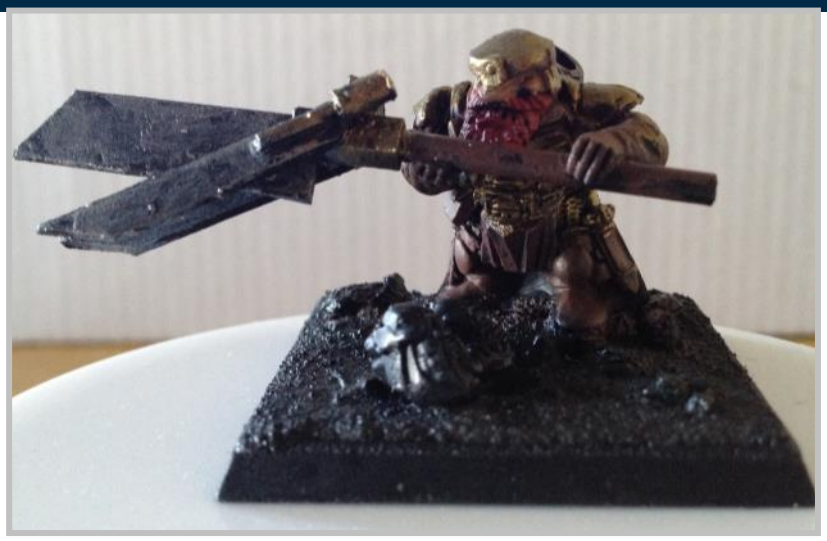
Options:

Take Pavises (Def 6+ to the front) OR Blasting Tips (Crushing Strength (2)) for 15pts for Troops and 25pts for Regiments.

Take Grapeshot Defenders (treat as Pike Phalanx) for 10pts for Troops and 25pts for Regiments.

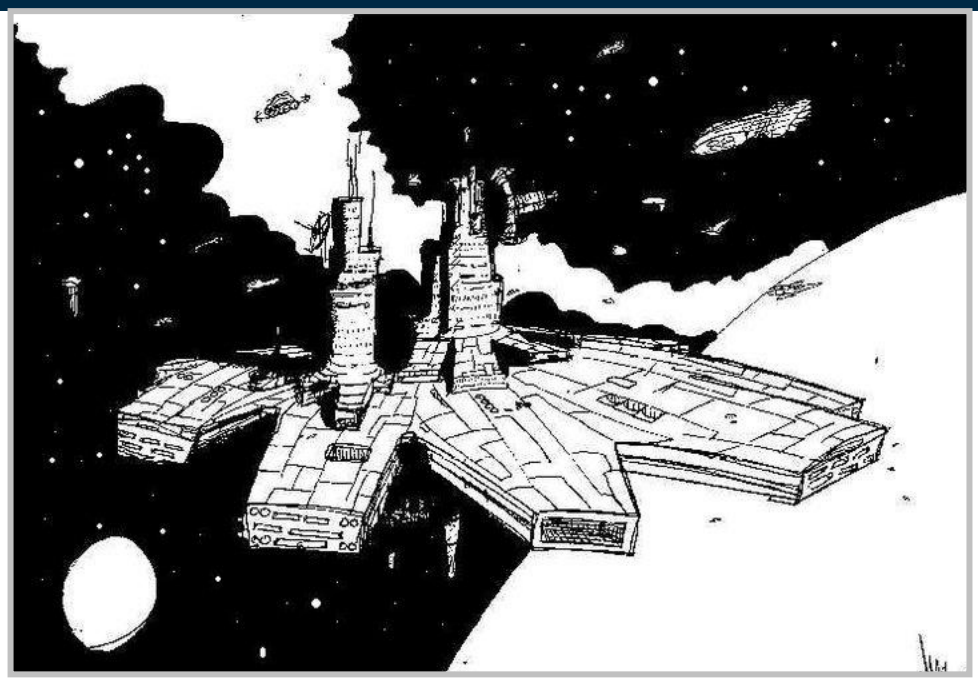
The special weapons corps was assembled from seasoned war engineers as a means of practically testing the WMDs. Deployed in loose formation units so as to avoid impaling one another with their varied saws and drills, they have proven devastating if erratic on the battlefield.▪





END TRANSMISSION

by Michael Grey



By Jonathan Hicks

The following are excerpts from *The Steenkamp Plan: Cover-Ups and Suppression around the Tallaxia Pandemic*, a chronological series of intercepted communications from different Sphere sources at the time of the rumoured Tallaxia Pandemic. The referred to sources, while mostly confirmed independently as actual people or agencies at the time of the outbreak, have never been verified as genuine and should be handled appropriately.

The book is banned Sphere-wide, and rumoured to be listed on the Council Protection Agency's so-called *black library* of prohibited texts. Because of this it is recommended this file is read while disconnect from the net.

FROM: THE OFFICE OF FRANCIS IBRAHIM, CHIEF OFFICER – INTER-CORPORATION RELATIONS
TO: CONNER JAMESON, MINISTRY OF EXTRAPLANETARY AFFAIRS
SUBJECT: POINT OF INTEREST (EYES ONLY)

Good morning, Conner

I'll get straight to the point; if anyone else is in the room with you, ask them to leave now. I know how you like your emails read to you, but this is important.

Okay? Good.

Do you remember the sub-space emergency messaging system you championed a few years ago? I know it was voted out as too expensive, but, well… look, I'm not proud of it, but the CPA appropriated the idea and ran with it. Hands on the table, I knew about the project and was even involved with the facilitation. I know it was your baby, and you were right, it would be a boon to the Sphere, but it was deemed too important to be trusted with civilian bureaucrats. That's why the Protection Agency was brought in.

If it helps sooth your ego any, the whole thing was set up and tested to perfection. The damn thing works, and if it wasn't for you, we wouldn't have it. I hope you understand. Politics and all that. Anyway,

I'm not mailing you to apologise, I'm mailing you because it *went off*.

This is so fresh and hush-hush the whole thing doesn't even have a code name yet, but I'm sure you'll be brought on down the line, but just remember who let you in beforehand, all right?

The alert came from some backwater called Tallaxia, out somewhere deep on the Gum Nebula. Only planet in the system, been in the Sphere close to a century and listed as Compliant for over fifty years, and set as Class Five for nearly all of those. The only reason such a shithole of a planet's been doing so well is it's the closest landfall for the dust clouds of the Vela Molecular Ridge. Enough mineral credits have been running through that place to make a core world blush, and now it has over eight billion people on it.

Well... it *had.* As of yesterday the jury's out on exactly how many there are now.

The brass is a bit worried. Seems there was a battalion of marines on-planet. Nothing hardcore, really no more than a staging ground to give new blood out of the academy chance to experience a posting before being sent somewhere more active. But still, enough firepower to put up serious resistance in case of anything up to and including a hostile planetary invasion.

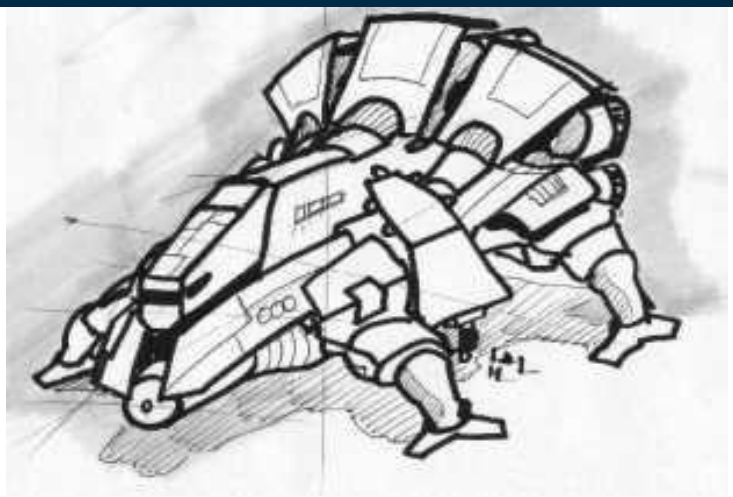
But as of yesterday, there may as well be no-one there for all the comms we're getting.

That would be worrying enough. Eight billion people come with some serious infrastructure, and there are even civilian stations which could send comm waves far enough out to the Kumovan system, the next closest. But no, nothing.

But that wasn't what really set the hairs on the back of my neck prickling.

You want to know what was?

By "Skolo"



By Jonathan Hicks

The message is a single use, one direction packet which can arrive within days to the target receiver up to nearly a billion AUs away. It goes through sub-space, but tears through it at such a rate that anyone monitoring the area would pick up the disturbance and could potentially intercept. There are, of course, safe guards. The messages are encrypted, read only and double coded.

But still, the packet arrived intact, but the thing is… it was empty. Nothing in it, nada.

Right now all the chatter in house is about what this could mean. You can imagine. On one hand we have the usual, "this is nothing to worry about. Just a misfire of the first use of a new tech, and ion storms causing havoc with comms". These are all the elected officials, of course. The people who need popular support to pad out their retirement funds.

And then you have the people advocating a complete armed tactical response, pushing the worst case scenario; full loss of a class five world.

What is thin on the ground though are reasons why the beacon was used at all, and the lack of response from Tallaxia. Even the military with their gung-ho we-can-handle-anything bullshit, are at a loss. The area is too far off the trade routes for pirates, even if they were able to take a whole planet off line. And it's at the other side of the galactic core, so we can rule out any interference from any other capable civ.

Nothing about this sits well, and you know what they say about misery? Well, I guess the same is true for nerves. This is going to be big, I just know it, but right now it's like we're crippled with indecision.

A marine battalion has been dispatched to investigate, they should be there in forty-eight hours. Maybe I'll be proved wrong and it was just ion storms and false alarms.

But I don't think so.

Look, don't mention this to anyone, okay? I'll speak to you soon. My love to Judith.

Frank.

****TRANSMISSION BEGINS****

LOC: 45KKI-JUUB8-JH89N
STAMP: 35110502 15:35:41GST
HOST: STRIKE CRUISER 'SOUTHERN CROSS'
OPERATION: LANDFALL
ADMIRAL JESSOP CRAWLON, COMMANDER, 3RD ARMOURED INFANTRY BATTALLION, HOUSE FRISSURE LTD.
MESSAGE START:

Arrived in Tallaxia's outer orbit at 0301GST, 2532ZULU. Proceeded with standard practice for possible hostile zone. Our arrival was not broadcast and local authorities not alerted to our presence.

Initial low range sweeps showed limited electromagnetic activity in Tallaxia's atmosphere, with no increase after our anchorage. Stronger scans confirmed indication our arrival had gone unnoticed.

Initial electromagnetic signatures that of geosynchronous satellites and guidance drones. Nothing manned. Latent radiation waves showed some craft had recently made sub-space jumps, although their signatures showed them to be nothing larger than personal transports, and nothing equipped to make the journey to Kumovan, the nearest system, and that many of those were not even aimed in that direction. Their current positions are unknown.

Some larger vessels remain in orbit, and, although they exhibit no outer signs of damage and of full operation, they do not respond to hails. Further scans showed no signs of life onboard.

Scans of planet display indication of mass conflict, clustered around large population centres. The countryside [TAG NOTE: Tallaxia is registered as a Temperate Range Three climate. No ice caps, major landmasses differing between open plain and thick coniferous forests] appears empty of human habitation, although concentrations of open radiation suggest thermonuclear explosions have occurred recently in several areas.

Massed weapon signatures are registering within major city boundaries, apparently without pattern, but with no let up in firing rates. Lines of weapon discharges suggest a battle line of roughly spherical shape, ringed around the city's centre and slowly contracting. The pattern is repeated in all cities, and indicate a battle being lost swiftly by one side.

That loss of life is in process, and on a mass scale, is evident. However orders are to gather intel before action, and as the infrastructure is mostly intact, nothing is occurring to countermand that order.

More records to follow.

Crawlon out.

MESSAGE ENDS

ADENDUM

LOC: 45KKI-JUUB8-JH890
STAMP: 35110502 19:18:02GST
HOST: STRIKE CRUISER 'SOUTHERN CROSS'

By "Skolo"

OPERATION: LANDFALL
ADMIRAL JESSOP CRAWLON, COMMANDER, 3RD ARMOURED INFANTRY BATTALLION, HOUSE FRISSURE LTD.
MESSAGE START:

All conflict on Tallaxia's surface has ceased. The alarm was raised at 1900GST and confirmed two minutes later. Within four hours of arrival, it appears the massed battles in all of Tallaxia's urban centres has ended.

Scans show no life signs within cities or towns.

The command team, lead by myself and Rear Admiral Coltrane, have run several scenarios to locate the winning side, but so far have no satisfactory theory.

Coltrane suggested we request permission to enact the Steenkamp Plan. I overruled him. The planet's core structures and administration is still over 77% intact, so it will not be levelled from space.

Captain Bezus has been ordered to gather a landing platoon to launch by 2000GST. The mission is to scout the countryside near Octaga, Tallaxia's capital on its southern continent.

More to follow.

MESSAGE ENDS

****END TRANSMISSION****

By Jonathan Hicks

FROM: THE OFFICE OF GUSTAV KALPREET, GOVERNOR KUMOVAN III AND SYSTEM. REPRESENTATIVE; HOUSE FRISSURE LTD.
TO: CAROLYN MOSES, HEAD INNER RIM COLONY SUPPORT; HOUSE FRISSURE LTD.
SUBJECT: ESCALATION IN INCIDENT: INC452246

Dear Carolyn

I know you said not to worry, but I have to report this. The numbers of the Brethren have escalated in the past week, and they've taken to calling themselves the Temple of Last Days. If that's not an indication of their intent I don't know what is.

I swear there's something in the air here. They held a big open air rally in Montanga Square two days ago. I know, I know. All the procedures say to deny cults publicity, but what was I supposed to do? I don't have the security forces to control a crowd that size if they rioted.

The rally turned into a mass recruitment drive, and now one in every five people on the street is wearing their badge or that ridiculous hood they wear.

And their preaching is getting more specific. They're promising the 'death of all life' within weeks, or that a plague will engulf all humanity, or some such.

You said there was a marine battalion in the area. I can't promise I can control the situation anymore, it's gotten too big for that. Can I ask you… no, forget that. I *need* those marines here. It frightens me to think what's gotten into these people, but not more than what they are capable of.

Please, just send them.

Gustav Kalpreet

Editor's note: Hours after sending the above message, the Kumovan-based cult known as the Temple of Last Days *stormed the water purification plant in Montanga, Kumovan's capital, and flooded the city's fresh water supply with VX nerve agent. The plumbing took the agent into every building connected throughout the city. Official casualties were listed as 15,587,411 dead, 3 injured. Among the casualties was Governor Kalpreet.*

****TRANSMISSION BEGINS****

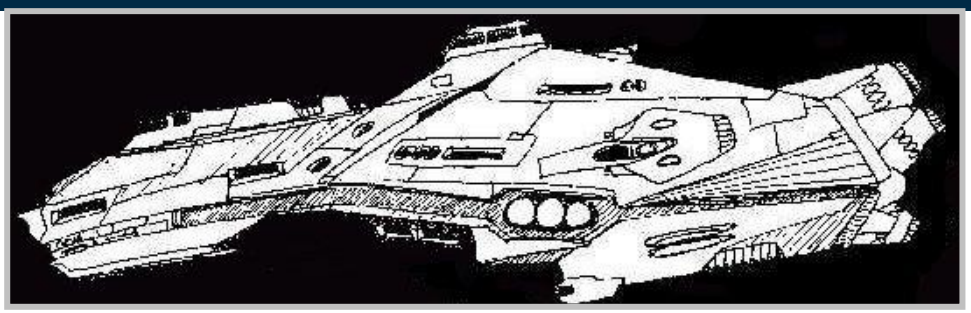
LOC: 45KKI-JUUB8-JH891
STAMP: 35110502 20:36:03GST / 03:05:03ZULU
HOST: TALLAXIA 789:753
OPERATION: LANDFALL
CAPTAIN ANTON BEZUS, COMMANDING OFFICER CHARLIE PLATOON, 3RD ARMOURED INFANTRY BATTALION, HOUSE FRISSURE LTD.
MESSAGE START:

Landfall made 2020GST, 36kms northeast of Octaga, Tallaxia's capital.

Orders are to secure beachhead, scout surrounding area and to avoid hostile forces if possible. Intel shows of mass conflict in built urban areas has ceased and the current position of antagonists is unknown. Extreme caution has been advised.

Because of the above our insertion zone was shifted to the more rural north. Landing site a clearing in thick forest. No signs of nearby habitation. Initial sweeps on instruments and by scouts report no activity nearby.

By "Skolo"



By Jonathan Hicks

Data shows an airfield to south. Will recon the site for possible baseop before moving on Octaga.

More to follow.

MESSAGE ENDS

****END TRANSMISSION****

R&D PROJECT SITE 51 : PERSONAL RESEARCH LOG DR XIAO NGU
35110420

Progress! The substrain has shown surprising reliance today. It appears Dr Praneel's suggestion of preserving the virus in refrigeration was what held us back. The cold did not kill the strain in itself, merely laid it dormant (apparently indefinitely as far as we know. Note to self; this will have to be looked into separately), however prolonged exposure to room temperature after thawing without a host leads of comparatively rapid degeneration.

At Dr Praneel's urging, we allowed the test subjects to house the virus unimpeded, and what do you know? It worked!

Appearances suggest a life cycle, albeit an exceedingly brief one, allows the strain to mingle with the host tissue (primarily the of the brain and muscle), resulting in the desired results.

Subjects show a marked increase in tensile and muscle strength, and also a single mindedness required for combat operations. I believe we all earned a night off after this one.

Some side effects, to note. Subjects became exceedingly aggressive, combined with an apparent loss in the ability to communicate verbally. This will prove to be a major hurdle if not addressed in future iterations. I can hear them now, hissing and moaning in the cells.

I think this batch is beyond usefulness. The supply shuttle from the 35th should arrive tomorrow with supplies and, hopefully, more prison- I'm sorry, I can't concentrate with all that banging! Note to self: see with maintenance if we can reinforce the one-way mirrors.

LOC: 45KKI-JUUBB-JHBIOI
STAMP: 35110503 01:06:36GST / 25:14:17ZULU
COMM MEMCARD: CAPTAIN ANTON BEZUS, COMMANDING OFFICER CHARLIE PLATOON, 3RD ARMOURED INFANTRY BATTALION

****TRANSMISSION BEGINS****

--Come in SOUTHERN CROSS, this is Captain Bezus. Copy?

--Captain this is Operator Jonsan of the SOUTHERN CROSS, please state your mission code word.
---mmit! Rolling!

--Thunder. Thank you, Captain. Please state your situation.

--Have contacted hostile forces [recording shows heavy breathing]. Losses heavy. Upwards of eighty, repeat 8-0, percent with more MIA. We're falling back to initial insertion point. Requesting air cover for extraction. Copy?

--Captain, the Admiral will have to approve Strike Bomber launches.

By "Skolo"

--Then get him [CENSORED] online!

[Pause in recording. A different voice replaces Operator Jonsan]

--This is Admiral Crawlon.

-- Admiral, we require air support for immediate extraction. We have suffered heavy losses we- [recording breaks here for a moment, lost in static and the punch of automated gunfire] –ing gone. The whole of Octaga is gone, Admiral.

--What do you mean gone, Captain?

--I mean lost, sir. Enemy saturation is total.

--And who is the enemy?

--Not sure, sir. They're fast. Very fast, and take too many shots to down. We're running low on ammo. We didn't equip for an all out conflict. [recording breaks into static here as the audio input is overloaded by what sounds like an animalistic scream] I'll be happy to give my full report on board, Admiral.

--…Survivors?

--[Laughing] I doubt it.

--Very well, Captain. Support incoming. Hold tight, son.

****END TRANSMISSION****

****TRANSMISSION BEGINS****

LOC: 45KKI-JUUB8-JH890
STAMP: 35110503 02:56:54GST / 28:45:54ZULU
HOST: STRIKE CRUISER 'SOUTHERN CROSS'
OPERATION: LANDFALL
ADMIRAL JESSOP CRAWLON, COMMANDER, 3RD ARMOURED INFANTRY BATTALLION, HOUSE FRISSURE LTD.
MESSAGE START:

By Jonathan Hicks

Gentlemen and Madam Councillors,

Thank you for your time and attention. You will find attached the video debrief of Captain Anton Bezus of the House Frissure Marine Corps. Captain Bezus lead an expeditionary tip onto the surface of Tallaxia, and I suggest you review the video before reading my recommendations.

Captain Bezus, and the words of the returning marines, paint a dire picture which some would find barely believable. However at the Captain's insistence we have launched several remotely controlled spy drones into the lower atmosphere, and the intel they returned do nothing to dispute their statements.

Sirs and Madam; Tallaxia is lost. The enemy are too numerous to count, and their attire and numbers suggest they can only be Tallaxia's recent citizens. They exhibit extreme aggression, and an inability to communicate and reason. Whatever is afflicting them appears to suppress their nerve centres, resulting in an inordinate

amount of firepower to individually eliminate. Attempts to secure specimens via limited landings have resulted in more loss of personnel with zero enemy captured.

Clean up operation would take decades, and initial cost in materials alone is projected in the trillions, not to mention the inevitable loss to manpower.

It is my recommendation that the Steenkamp Plan be enacted, and the planet quarantined until the fallout has passed.

This is my own recommendation, and also that of Captain Bezus, currently recovering in sick bay with some of his men with injuries sustained in the escape.

I will prepare the bombards and await permission.

Admiral Crawlon.

MESSAGE ENDS

****END TRANSMISSION****

****TRANSMISSION BEGINS****

LOC: -WITHHELD-
STAMP: 35110505 18:30:14GST
HOST: -DESIGNATION WITHHELD- 'CRUSADER' CAPTAIN PAWL, ENFORCER TACTICAL SECTION 'HAMMER'
MESSAGE START:

Orders received:

Relocate with all haste to Tallaxia (LOC:45KKI-JUUB8-JH89N)

[CHECK]

Scout and report condition of planet and inhabitants

[CHECK]

Investigate communication blackout with House Frissure strike cruiser SOUTHERN CROSS

[CHECK]

By "Skolo"

Hostiles expected, proceed with extreme caution

[CHECK]

Course plotted and ready to execute.

Pawl out.

MESSAGE ENDS

****END TRANSMISSION****

****TRANSMISSION BEGINS****

FROM: THE OFFICE OF JAIME SHARPE, GOVERNOR SYRUS V. SYSTEM REPRESENTATIVE; THE HENSCHU CONGLOMERATE
TO: CONNER JAMESON, MINISTRY OF EXTRAPLANETARY AFFAIRS
SUBJECT: AID REQUEST (SENT WITH HIGH IMPORTANCE)

Dear Conner

Please consider this an official request for aid. We've been receiving refugees from Kumovan III, Syrus's nearest neighbour under the House Frissure hegemony. They began arriving two days ago, in ones and twos, but now their thousands. We can handle the influx right now, but if it continues we're going to run into food problems, and next month is the beginning of Syrus's monsoon season. I believe this request is early enough to give us some leeway, but please hurry.

By Jonathan Hicks

It looks as if Kumovan is in the middle of some kind of civil war. I can't say I'm surprised. Kalpreet was not suited to the position, but that's Frissure's problem, not ours.

Also, we've received two escape shuttles from Tallaxia. I'm aware of the general order not to allow ships from there into orbit, but the automated scans showed no weapons, only injured people in stasis, so I had them land and placed on medical watch. I'll send a full report on what they have to say when they wake up.

Regards,
Jaime Sharpe.

****END TRANSMISSION****

For more stories like this, be sure to visit Michael's blog at www.michaelgrey.com.au

Deadzone Plague Strike Force by Grant Mahoney

All the Range: Dwarf Rangers

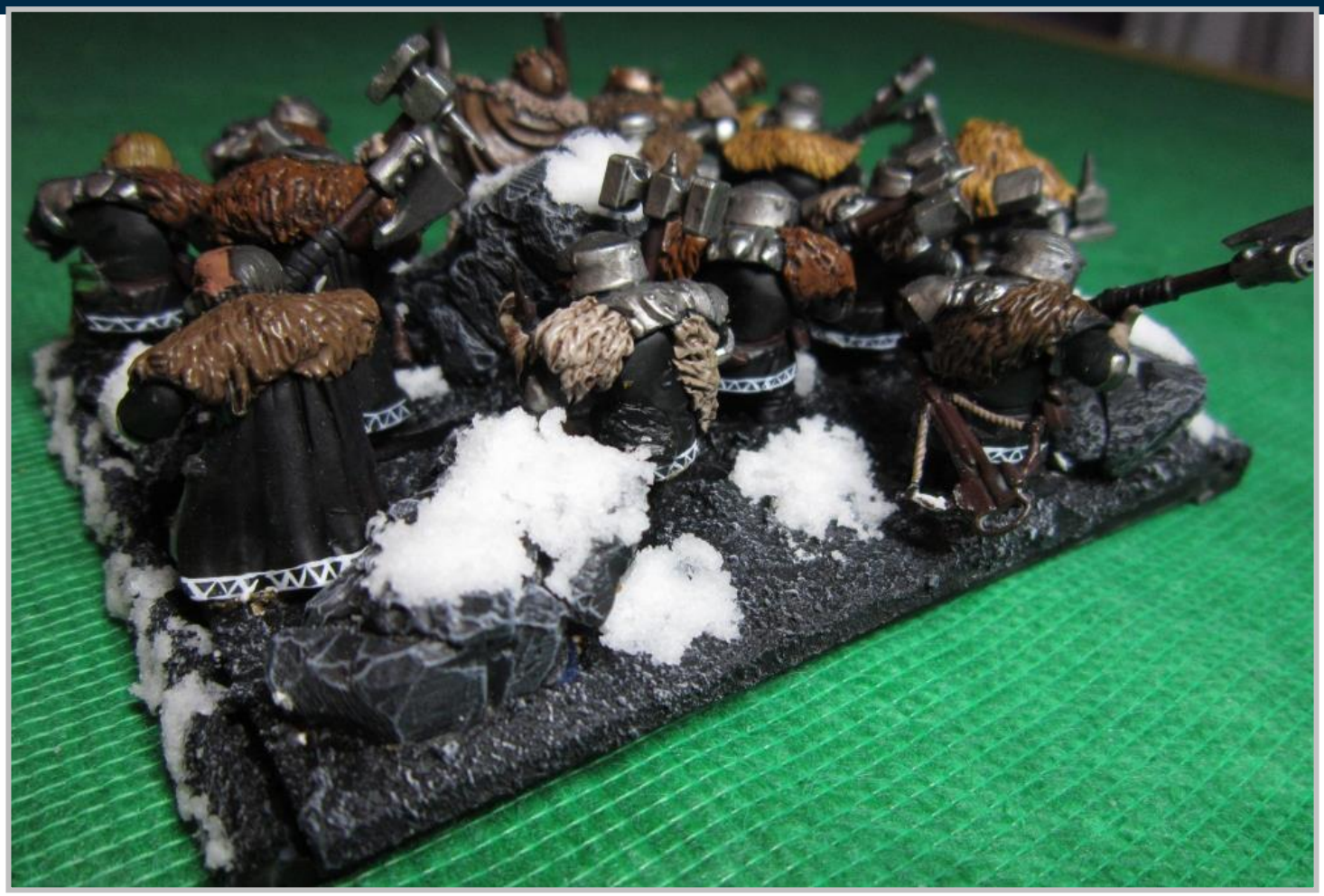
By Neil Dixon

Problem Recognition

Practising for the Clash of Kings tournament, my Dwarfs suffered from a distinct lack of manoeuvrability and a complete incompetence in dealing with war machines. Rangers look pricey in terms of points – 135 points for a troop when you can get the equivalent Ironwatch with the same shots for 115 points with Piercing (2). A regiment is 175 points, yet the same number of Bulwarkers is 125 points. You are unable to field a lot of them to overwhelm the enemy army in combat or through hail of fire. So what is the appeal?

Most armies have a choice of light cavalry units or flyers. For Dwarfs, Rangers are one of their most versatile units that can fill that recon role. Vanguard allows them a very useful move before the first turn. You can get their missiles in range from turn one, and take any objectives or defensive positions just outside your deployment zone. Any

Close combat armed regiment from the front. The leader is a Westwind model, whose fur coat fits perfectly with the theme. The Dwarf ruin In the center is produced by Scibor.



Close combat armed regiment from the rear. I cut away the knives on some of the models and glued on spare crossbows. Some of the hammers were replaced with axes for variety.

other unit may be shot before they get to the cover of a wall or building, and would need to sacrifice a turn of shooting to do so.

Firing on the move makes them ideal for capturing objectives in the middle of the board, or to launch defensive fire if the enemy tries to outmanoeuvre you. All too often, sneaky flying units like Wraiths and Elf Dragons position themselves out of the shooting arc of your Ironwatch. Deploying Rangers instead means you can turn to face and launch a few shots before they charge.

Regiments are decent in combat when they need to be, as Crushing Strength (1) gives them that extra edge against high defence units. Although they have typical Dwarf survivability, ensure they have support; otherwise they will quickly become overwhelmed.

One unit on each flank is always a safe bet, supporting your main blocks of infantry. They can flush out the enemy where line of sight for your cannons is limited, such as wooded areas or between buildings.

Modelling Rangers

I used the tutorial by Matthäus Mieczkowski (aka "Max Jet") in Ironwatch Issue 1 as my guide. I created two regiments, taking about three hours to sculpt the fur for each. I

thought this was time well invested to get unique models.

After painting, I mounted models from each regiment on two bases of MDF, each 40x100mm. I find splitting the base makes it easy to access all the areas with the brush when painting.

During position and assembly I attempt to make the models interact to show what they are doing at a certain point in the battle. Dwarfs are always ready to fight either at close quarters or at range, so I armed the entire regiment with one type of weapon. The regiment with axes and hammers I imagined as wood cutters and huntsmen, roaming through the landscape. The leader is encouraging their relentless advance. Having lost one of their comrades already, the crossbow armed regiment is bunched up around the ruins, under attack from all sides. So, there you have it. Try as many different units in your army as you can, and customise, customise, customise!▪

Crossbow armed regiment from the front. I used the Mantic leader and musician model but replaced their weapons with crossbows.

Crossbow armed regiment from the rear. One Ranger has unsheathed his axe to slice up a foe that has strayed too close.

Making the Special Weapon Corp

By Doug Newton-Walters

After receiving my Kings of War kickstarter with 15 Shieldbreakers in it, I was trying to figure out what to do with the extra 5 dwarfs. First I thought perhaps I could get an additional 5 to create a regiment, but as I've got plenty from the two crazy bags I got last Christmas, I decided to go with converting them into heroes instead.

So which to make? Well I'd just bought the king's council so the only model I didn't have was an engineer battle driller (ok so it's a monster...). Seeing as how they're the cheapest melee unit in the dwarf army I thought I might as well make five of them... but then I started thinking how cool it would be to have a large infantry unit of engineers with crazy weapons and these are the result.

These conversions comprise fairly simple components. I started with five dwarf models and the open hand Shieldbreaker arms.

The unit champion uses an arm from the cannon sprue (Mr Pointy) for some extra authoritarian gravitas. Important note: Don't ,whatever you do, break off the pointy finger; Otherwise you'll have to re sculpt it like I did here....

I used the bare head from the cannon sprue in the unit to give them some more variety.

To highlight their engineering qualifications I gave them goggles from the steel warriors. We all know engineers are chronic gogglers right? they'd probably be chronic googlers too if it existed (Using it to goggle at, er ,engineering websites....)

The rest of the components are varying sizes of plastic tube bought from Evergreen.

The buzz saw and drill components are taken from GW Ork weapons, whilst the triple shears are made from bits of plasticard.

The backpacks, which are supposed to be combustion engines are larger bits of plastic tube glued together in interesting shapes.

Each weapon has a cable or cables coming from it. This contains the universal joint that provides torque to the blade or drill. These were made with bits of guitar wire or thin plastic rod (~1mm or 4/3rds of a duck's toenail if you're using Imperial) and bent around.

Because they're either going to be used as Large Infantry or Monsters I decided to mount them on 40mm bases which required a bit of decoration. With such gruesome weaponry I thought some strategically placed severed orc heads lying in pools of their own ichor would do the trick.

I left the round base on their feet to give them a more menacing profile, so that required building up sand around them so it didn't look so obvious.

Painting

All my painting was done with Vallejo Game/ Model Colour and cheap black spray undercoat.

Like all my Mantic dwarfs I decided to paint them brown and bronze. This was chosen mainly for speed as they can both be shaded using the same colour.

First I undercoated them with a cheap matt black spray. Anyone in Australia should be familiar with Supercheap Auto and their Export Paint which is ~$3.50 a can. I've been undercoating all my models with this paint for the last 10 years or so. I find it unethical to pay a tonne for paint that's going under everything else.

After that I 'wetbrushed*" all of them with Heavy Sienna. Vallejo's Heavy paints are referred to as Extra Opaque because they have lots of pigment in them.

I then painted their skin with heavy skintone and their armour with Model Colour Bronze. The blades and backpacks were painted with Gunmetal Metal.

:This is like drybrushing but with a wetter brush. It leaves the paint underneath in the cracks and covers the rest of the model. Because the paint is wet it doesn't produce a dusty or grainy effect. With practice you can wetbrush with precision – I wet brushed the teeth on the dwarfs for example.

The whole model was washed with Sepia shade, a rather strong dark brown wash.

To highlight the brown cloth I added heavy goldbrown, with a final highlight adding bonewhite.

The gloves belt, boots and weapon haft were washed with black shade, making them black. These were highlighted with a mix of ghost grey and washed again.

These washes are pretty good at smoothing highlights out. If you find yourself with really harsh highlights another coat of the wash can smooth it out.

The skin was highlighted with Model Colour Salmon Rose, albeit rather watered down

and lightly applied.

The armour and metal was brushed with their original colours to pick out the edges.

The pipes were painted Sun yellow and highlighted with bonewhite.

Finally the lenses of the goggles were painted turquoise and highlighted with a mix with ghost grey.

The bases were drybrushed with heavy warmgrey and a light brush of bonewhite on top.

The orc heads were given a coat of camouflage green and washed with a mix of green shade and fleshtone shade and highlighted with a wetbrush of dead flesh.

Lastly I glued green flock to the base in small patches. Because these are dwarfs from rocky highlands, I wanted a base that wasn't grassy. So I washed the flock with watered down white paint to make it look a bit flatter and paler. Hopefully it looks halfway to the lichen I was going for.

So that's about it. Now all they need is some 'test subjects' on which to violate the Culloch Mor convention on the humane dismembering of enemy combatants....▪

Blood Puddles

Back in 2000 I was painting a great unclean one and wanted convincing slime trails and puddles without spending tonnes on resins. I figured if I made a puddle of PVA and painted that, it produced the desired effect.

You'll find you'll want to put less PVA on than you need. That's because it shrinks a lot when in large amounts. A blob 5mm high will barely reach 2mm after it dries. So don't worry if you get it in places you didn't want, you can't really tell anyway.

Slap it on in the desired areas and wait for it to dry. The undercoat it with the desired colour. I find with blood that a mix of red and sepia/flesh wash applied to red creates a really nice rich red colour. Paint several coats of gloss varnish on it to increase the sense of depth and maybe a few lighter red highlights.

This can be used for any fluid although it does look better if you're trying to represent thick fluids unless you're being careful about how you apply it. No need for expensive resins if you don't want transparent liquid, PVA does the trick.

Sergeant Nero - Painting the Mantic Orc Flagger

By Darren Lysenko

I think that painting any miniature well is a challenge in itself. Though it may be less so for 'gaming' miniatures, even if you're just throwing on a base and a couple of highlights to get an army on the table, nobody sets out to paint a miniature badly - Lord knows, you pay enough money for most of them, why wouldn't you want them to look as good as is realistically possible for the purpose which they were intended?

Yes, painting miniatures well is a tricky.

This fact is even more true when the miniature in question is painted for a competition. After all, it's not just you who is judging the final piece, or your client - it's your peers, and I think that those are the people you set out to impress the most.

Of course, all of this is a lot easier if the miniature is a good one, and at the moment I can think of no better miniature than Mantic Games' stunning Orc Flagger. It's a fantastic mini with so many different elements to have fun with - battered old armor, large areas of orc-ish skin, flowing cloth, matted fur, and (quite frankly) a ridiculously massive sword which balances the large banner (a canvas in its own right) perfectly.

I had just two weeks to paint and base this model, a time-limit set by the competition

which made the excitement of working on it even more intense!

It was February 29th and the Chelmsford Bunker's BunkerBrush2012 competition had begun...

DAY ONE

Before the competition began, entrants were allowed to clean up their miniatures and undercoat them, thought (obviously) no other painting was allowed.

Due to the size of the banner, I decided to paint it separately to the main body of the Flagger, though I did attach the sword arm. I find it much easier to assemble as much as you can of a mini before painting as long as the parts don't make it too difficult to paint into the deeper parts of the model. This helps when trying to shade and highlight the miniature, as well as making it easier to keep the color scheme consistent. (At this point, I'd like to apologize for the poor quality of the WIP images, as they were taken in what can best be described as 'a great hurry' under 'poor lighting conditions' and usually while I was waiting for something to dry...!

I began by painting the armor as it was one of the largest areas of the miniature. Unlike a lot of painters, I would rather paint skin tones last as I find it helps me to make sure that these are the most eye-catching areas of the model. It is vital that the face, above all things, stands out.

I don't mind admitting that I'm a painfully slow painter at the best of times and given the short time available to complete the

Flagger, I opted for a bit of an experiment over any sort of 'straight' attempt at non-metallic metal (NMM).

Instead of using a color base for the armor, I actually used several thin coats of Boltgun Metal paint, but, crucially, I then shaded and highlighted not with other metallics, but with standard acrylics instead - always, though, keeping a touch of Boltgun Metal in the mix.

By **DAY TWO**, you can see how this was coming along. To shade the armour, I added Scorched Brown and Blazing Orange to the Boltgun Metal and painted those into all of the darker areas, adding Chaos Black for good measure when painting right between the armor plates and at the base of the sword, etc.

I then highlighted in three stages, adding Ice Blue to Boltgun Metal, the using just Ice Blue, then adding Skull White to that, and then painting the 'hottest' areas of reflection with pure Skull White.

At the end of **DAY THREE**, the iron armor was all but complete and I moved onto the bronze, beginning the base with a mix of Shining Gold and Snakebite Leather, before shading and highlighting in a similar way to above (but mixing Necron Abyss to shade and adding Bleached Bone to highlight)...

By the end of **DAY FOUR,** the metallics were finished and Sergeant Nero was beginning to take shape...

After this photo was taken, and in a fit of caffeine madness at around half-one in the morning, I decided to basecoat all of the deep-blue-black areas with Necron Abyss so that come the fifth day, I was ready to run as soon as my feet hit the ground...

DAY FIVE

While all this was going on, I had been taking some time in-between various stages to construct the base for the Flagger. Sometime, sadly, fantastically-painted miniatures can be let down when the ground beneath them fails to live up to their splendor. That's why I started to create the base almost as soon as I started to paint the model that it would sit under.

The rocks were all stones that came from my garden, and the sand came from my

daughters' sand-pit (excitedly sprinkled on by none other than my eldest!). In fact, apart from the base itself and the Battlefields Highland Tuft from The Army Painter, I didn't need to spend any money (so far) on the base. Painting it all was a very relaxing distraction from the rigors of the faux-NMM armor of the Flagger, as it was painted entirely using various stages of drybrushing and washes, and nothing more.

By the end of the day, I had also managed to all-but-finish the blues on the main miniature and the banner section, with just one or two more layers of highlighting needed where they most caught the light.

The shades and highlights on the blues were very simply done by adding varying amounts of black to the Necron Abyss for the shades, while highlighting up to Ice Blue (again).

I find that it really helps with the look of a model to try and use the same palette throughout the paint job, always highlighting and shading with the same colors in order to cement the coherency of all the separate areas. Ice Blue is my color of choice for the entire Bloody Hells army, as I feel it lends a coldness that works brilliantly with the snow -theme of their bases.

It was now **DAY SIX** and, time allowing for any problems or delays, I was half-way through the competition.

I still had no idea whether or not the mini would be finished for the deadline, but as most of the model had some paint on it, I managed to convince myself that everything would be fine.

After finishing the relatively small leather areas, I pressed on with the 'mane' of the cloak and the cloth, opting for quite a bright orange color to counter the dull blues and browns of the armor.

It was the end of the next day by the time I had gotten this done to my satisfaction, and, looking at the shock of flame-colored fur, burning like a halo behind the Flagger's head, I decided that his name would be 'Sergeant Nero'...!

The orange itself was based with Bestial Brown and highlighted with Blazing Orange. After two washes of Ogryn Flesh, it was highlighted with Dwarf Flesh, then Bleached Bone before receiving a very thin Baal Red glaze.

So far, I was very excited about the way that Nero was turning out, but also knew that unless I could make the banner (almost half the area of the miniature!) look just as good as what I'd done so far, the model simply wouldn't work...

I felt that perhaps it was time to think about the Flagger's... um... flag!

DAYS SEVEN AND EIGHT

The Flagger's cloak is split into two parts, the large mane at the top and the shorter hair making up the majority of the cloak. Having finished the mane already, it was time to move onto the main cloak.

Now, everyone has their weakness - Superman has Kryptonite, a Cyberman has gold, Nicholas Cage has acting. My weakness is fur. Don't get me wrong, I can paint it, sure - but I certainly have to put a lot more effort into it than anything else on a mini.

I don't mind admitting that in the end, I was less than happy with the back of the Flagger - I had intended for the cloak to be the fur of a lion or some such big cat, so I plumbed for a sandy-yellowy-brown for the main body of it.

Sadly, though painted relatively well, I found that this color was completely at-odds with

the palette of the rest of the miniature - but having already painted it three times and being aware that there was scant time for perfectionism (being more than half-way into the competition time limit already), I had to grit my teeth and just let the cloak lie.

If time allows in future, I would be sorely tempted to re-paint the cloak a dirty grey-blue. In retrospect, I actually think that this would make the flaming-orange mane look

even better.

DAY NINE was the point in the competition that I had really been looking forward to since the start - the Orc flesh!

This stage is where a miniature goes from being a bit of metal with some (hopefully) nicely-painted bits on it, to being a living, breathing character.

I always like the flesh of a miniature to shine out a little bit brighter than the rest of it, so I always tend to err on the lighter side of caution.

For this reason, I basecoated the flesh with Goblin Green, using lots of thin coats over the Skull White undercoat, rather than one thick coat. It takes much more time to do, obviously, but the amount of detail this preserves is well worth all the effort!

Though in terms of area, the skin was a relatively small part of the miniature, I spent a total of almost six hours working on it to get it right.

At the risk of repeating previous posts (Mantic's Goblin Sneek springs to mind...), the skin was shaded and highlighted with lots of blue tones, giving the flesh a cold look that would fit in well with

the snow-themed base that I had planned.

I added a touch of Liche Purple and Necron Abyss to the original green, painting very thinly into the recesses over several coats, adding more Necron Abyss for the second, deeper, shading pass.

It's important to note that (though everybody has a different way of blending), you don't need your paint to be wet on the mini when you blend, nor do you need to continually alter the shade seven, eight, or nine times to get a smooth transition between your colors. All you need is thin paint and a lot of patience.

The trick is to have your paint so thin that when you put it on, you virtually can't see it (seriously). As long as you make sure that you don't 'pool' the paint on and that the area is completely dry before you add more, after fifteen, maybe twenty extremely thin applications, the translucency of the paint will have done all the hard work and you'll have a really nice, smooth, blend.

(Meanwhile, back at the Orc...) I painted the highlights in two color stages; a 1:1 mix of Goblin Green and Ice Blue and then finally, pure Ice Blue.

DAY TEN

With all of the 'main' work done on the miniature, it was time to begin work on the actual design for the banner.

It was very easy to get carried away on the Flagger himself, without realizing that the actual flag was just as important!

The image on the right shows the banner after I 'pencilled-in' the design using a thin coat of Skull White, to give a strong, light base for the design.

Inspired by the flaming mane of hair on the cloak, I decided to opt for something similar on the banner. Rolling flames, crashing like red waves across the banner... perfect!

Or so I thought…

I got about half-way into painting the 'flames' when I realized that I'd made a huge mistake with the design. Even though I hadn't done any highlighting yet, I could tell that the design just wouldn't work. The red and the blue just clashed terribly and the flames became lost in the undulating banner.

That was annoying to say the least.

The outline in the first picture seemed to be rather prophetic, as you can see from the finished banner below!

White worked so much better than the red because it actually dominates the flag, rather

than clashing with the background. It also is more in-keeping with the overall snow theme of the miniature.

I've not done a tremendous amount of freehand banners, so this was definitely a learning experience for me, but a welcome one all the same.

DAY ELEVEN

By now, the banner and the Flagger himself were finished, so all that remained were for me to finish off the last few bits of the base, and of course glue the banner to the main miniature.

The snow on the base was applied in three very thick 'gloopy' coats to allow it to 'flow' over the sides of the rocks, rather than just cling to them like a thin layer of dust. I basically mixed PVA glue with an equal amount of Skull White and applied it only to the horizontal surfaces, being careful to avoid any areas that would have been shielded from snow-fall. The addition of white to the PVA is very important as the glue on its own will dry transparent and the resulting look is more grey than white. Afterwards, I liberally coated all of the snow

with Citadel 'Ardcoat to give it a realistic shine and take away the dry, powdery look.
Finally, to finish off, I painted on the blood splatters. These were simply done by painting thinned Blood Red onto the affected areas before adding Chaos Black to it and then painting this onto the areas where the blood would be the thickest. Finally, more 'Ardcoat was carefully painted on to give the blood that tell-tale glisten.

And that's it! One Mantic Orc Flagger!

You can take a look at the finished model in the Flare Gallery if you want to see more pictures of the finished miniature. Please let me know what you think!

And of course, if you want to know more about Flare Miniature Painting, you can visit our website!▪

A Tale of Orcs and Dwarves.

By Chris Cousen and Stuart Smith

By Chris Schlumpberger

Chris and I have been gaming together now for over 25 years, collecting, painting and even swapping many a figure over that time. Despite changing jobs making me move further away and family pressures meaning that we don't get to game as often as we would like, it is a rare pleasure to be savoured whenever our armies get chance to meet.

We currently live the best part of a 2 hour drive away from each other but manage to squeeze in about 3 or 4 gaming days each year.

Our current favourite rules include 'Kings of War' and 'Warpath' both of which have led to many phone calls and e-mails plotting our next armies and our next games.

Recently Chris drove up to my house for a day of gaming where we opted to play Kings of War using our slowly growing Orc and Dwarf armies. The small number of figures and units we have completed for these armies led to us opting to play two 600 point games. We used my rules for small battles (published in an earlier issue of Ironwatch) to help select the scenarios with the understanding that the victor of the first scenario would have his force boosted by being able to select one of the random cards

The Armies			
The Dwarf Army: Stuart		The Orc Army: Chris	
Dwarf King	130 pts	Orc Krudger	120 pts
20x Dwarf Ironclads, full command	135 pts	Orc Flagger	30 pts
10x Ironwatch, rifles	115 pts	Healing Charm	30 pts
5x Dwarf Brockriders, with Pipes of Terror	135	20x Orc Greataxes, full command	130 pts
1x Dwarf Ironbelcher	85	30x Orc Axes, full command	190 pts
Total	600 pts	5x Orc Sniffs	50 pts
		5x Orc Sniffs	50 pts
		Total	600 pts

Dwarven Battle Line, Turn 1

Orc Battle Line, Turn 1

I have designed for the game (also in an earlier issue of Ironwatch).

Orcs entering the stone ruins, Turn 2

The host on our gaming days usually provides lunch so I opted for the ease of baked potatoes, planned for the end of the first game. This provided much merriment when I realised that I had turned on the large oven having placed the potatoes in the small oven! We enjoyed our lunch, somewhat late part way through game 2 thanks to the microwave. I was obviously too engrossed in our games to notice which oven I was switching on.

Whilst waiting for Chris to arrive my daughters helped out by rolling for the scenario and placing the scenery on the table for me. The girls rather over did the scenery but we ended up with a 'Capture the Stone Circle' scenario with the stone circle placed in the centre of the table amidst the numerous woods and hills. We were ready to play... but I did remove a few pieces of scenery once the girls had gone to school.

By Darren Lysenko

The Battle of the Stones

Battle Report written by Chris.

Turn 1

As both armies approached the stones, the Orc scouts sneaked forwards to try to seize the prize early. The rest of the Orc army followed them at full speed. The sniffs facing the goat/gruff riders loosed their arrows and to everyone's surprise caused some casualties (1 D).

Turn 2

In response the dwarf Ironclads ran as fast as their little legs could take them, but couldn't quite reach the stone circle. The guns of the Ironwatch rang out, but caused only minor damage (1D) to the sniffs opposite, and the cannon missed the massive target of the

Horde completely.

Turn 3

The sniffs in the stone circle charged through at the Ironclads, but the uneven ground would make their attack less effective. Their companions continued to shoot at the goat riders, again causing some damage to the hairy riders. The remainder of the Orc army advanced, but the Flagger was disappointed to realise he couldn't see the sniffs to use his Healing Charm on them (maybe he wanted to stay out of sight of the dwarf guns?). Just outside the stone circle the sniffs fought like a bunch of elves and failed to hit anything, retreating in disappointment back into the circle.

Turn 4

The Ironclads, no doubt expecting an easy victory, charged the hapless sniffs, who cowered behind the stones in dread anticipation. On the other side of the battlefield the Gruff riders charged the other sniffs whilst the Ironwatch shot at the Horde, inflicting minimal damage (1D). The cannon crew were too busy arguing (apparently over the correct way to cook potatoes) to shoot straight, the ball flying wide of the mark as the Orc horde jeered at them. The charge of the Ironwatch inflicted many casualties on the sniffs in the circle, but they bravely held

Orc Sniffs attack the Dwarf Ironclads, Turn 3

their position; the dwarves grumbling as they retreated and prepared for the inevitable counter attack. The Gruff Riders were luckier, slashing about themselves in a rain of blood and limbs they soon put the remaining sniffs to flight (8D), then, to more jeering and chicken noises, they stumbled back away from the horde.

Orc Greataxes charge the Dwarf Ironclads, Turn 7

Turn 5

The remaining sniffs in the stone circle charged the Ironwatch again, their enthusiasm due, no doubt, to the presence of the fearsome Greataxes moving up just behind them. The horde charged the Gruff riders, making chicken noises all the time, whilst the flagger slunk off round the building on the flank, using his charm to heal the wounds taken earlier by the horde. To the right of the Greataxes, Goreax spied his rival trying to hide behind the Ironclads, and bellowing a challenge, charged into the surprised Dwarf King, Amlodi. The Orcs fought hard, but a combination of tough dwarven armour and having to fight in cramped quarters (the sniffs and the horde both had a -1 penalty for being disrupted) meant that little was done in the end. (The sniffs caused 2D, the horde did 3D and Goreaxe did 1D). Amazed at their lack of success, or the dwarfs' tenacity, the Orcs shuffled backwards and prepared for the dwarven charge.

Turn 6

The Orc jeering and shouting stopped as the dwarves hit home with a bone crunching thud. The Ironclad's made short work of the sniffs in the stone circle (3D), the few remaining fled the field. The Ironwatch and the Gruff Riders smashed into the horde, but despite the casualties (7D) they held, just (wavering). Fortunately, the Dwarf King Amlodi, 'the Bringer of Sorrows' proved as effective as his artillery and failed to harm Goreaxe.

Turn 7

Despite the horde being temporally out of action, Goreaxe knew that he could still win. With a shout of "follow me lads" he charged into the Ironclad dwarves, no doubt leaving the king somewhat surprised. The Greataxes hit the front of the Ironclads whilst the flagger continued his lone mission round the side of the building, pausing only to use his healing charm again to assist the horde. The combined attack on the Ironclads was sufficient to drive them away, despite the king's desperate pleas to them to stay. The Greataxes then turned to face the flank of

By "Dusty"

the Ironwatch.

Turn 8

Despite the threat of the Greataxes, the Ironwatch joined the Gruff Riders in charging the horde. The king chanced his hammer against Goreaxe again, while the cannon crew were delighted to see the flagger in their sights, but once again failed to hit either the flagger or the door of the barn behind him. The Ironwatch proved ineffective, but the Gruff Riders were able to slay some of the horde (2D). Perhaps confused after their last melee, the horde began to shuffle backwards (double 6 nerve test), but caught sight of their army's standard (reroll, double 5) and held firm. The King was able to wound Goreaxe, but he just shrugged it off.

Turn 9

The flagger's purpose became clear as he ran towards the cannon whilst the horde charged the Gruff Riders and the Greataxes hit the flank of the Ironwatch. Annoyed by the dwarf king's persistence, Goreaxe ran at him, axe raised. Although the flagger damaged the cannon, it's crew bravely held their positions. The horde did better, after a whirlwind of green arms and bloody axes (5D) the last few Gruff Riders galloped away. Despite being hit in the flank, the Ironwatch sustained few casualties, (1D) and held (snake eyes on the nerve test). Amlodi, the Dwarf King likewise shrugged off the damage Goraxe caused (snake eyes again).

Turn 10

Amlodi picked his target carefully and charged the Greataxes; the Ironwatch charged the horde, while the cannon crew nervously hefted their ramrods. Despite the king killing a few of the Greataxes (2D), they held firm. The fight seemed to have gone out of the rest of the dwarves, and they failed to do anything worthwhile.

Turn 11

Seizing the initiative the flagger slew one of the cannon crew, the rest fled. Both the Greataxes and the horde slammed into the Ironwatch. Despite causing little actual damage (1D) it was enough to break the dwarves who tripped over their beards in their haste to escape. Goreaxe once more wounded the King, but, no doubt distracted by the Orcs victory cheers, he failed to stop the Amlodi escaping. No doubt he would be back, but for now victory, and the stone circle, belonged to the Orcs.

The Dwarves Strike Back!

Battle report written by Stuart.

Young King Amlodi, infuriated by his losses at the stone circle hastily assembled a new Dwarven assault force. Dragging a new cannon and crew along with them Amlodi sent a unit of Brock Riders (that look like goats and answer to the name of Gruff's) to scout out the Orc position.

Having found where the victorious Orc's were partying Amlodi sent his Gruff's on a flanking manoeuvre little realising that the Orc's had likewise split their forces. With the Orc's busy guzzling whatever foul brew it is that they enjoy and singing rude songs the Dwarves had plenty of time to deploy in a good position allowing them a better field of fire than in the previous battle and then...the Orc's spotted the threat.

Once again, the Orcs still led by Thudger the Krudger swarmed forward. Rather over confidently as they were hit (at long last) by a good shot from the dwarf cannon (a roll of 6).

Thankfully for the Dwarves, their Gruff's arrived (at the start of turn 2). Another good cannon shot (another 6) added to the Orcs damage causing them to waver and the Gruff's soon charged across the battlefield hitting them in the flanks (I didn't have enough dice for that attack, I had to throw two handfuls of dice).

This left Thudger and his pesky Flagger on their own apart from their relief force, which had by now arrived. The Dwarves turned their attention onto this new threat. Another good cannon shot (a 5 this time) and an excellent round of rifle fire from the Ironwatch Dwarves soon discouraged that threat which rather rapidly melted away. At this point the Dwarf King was seen to dance his happy dance!

Game 2 Battle Lines

The Orcs and their Krudger move forward

With the final turn looming the Dwarven King, Amlodi led his Ironclads in a charge on Thrudger and his Flagger who after a brief melee turned tail and fled .

With the Orc force thoroughly routed King Amlodi led his troops home hoping that by now his baked potato was finally cooked? It was a much longer way home for Thrudger!

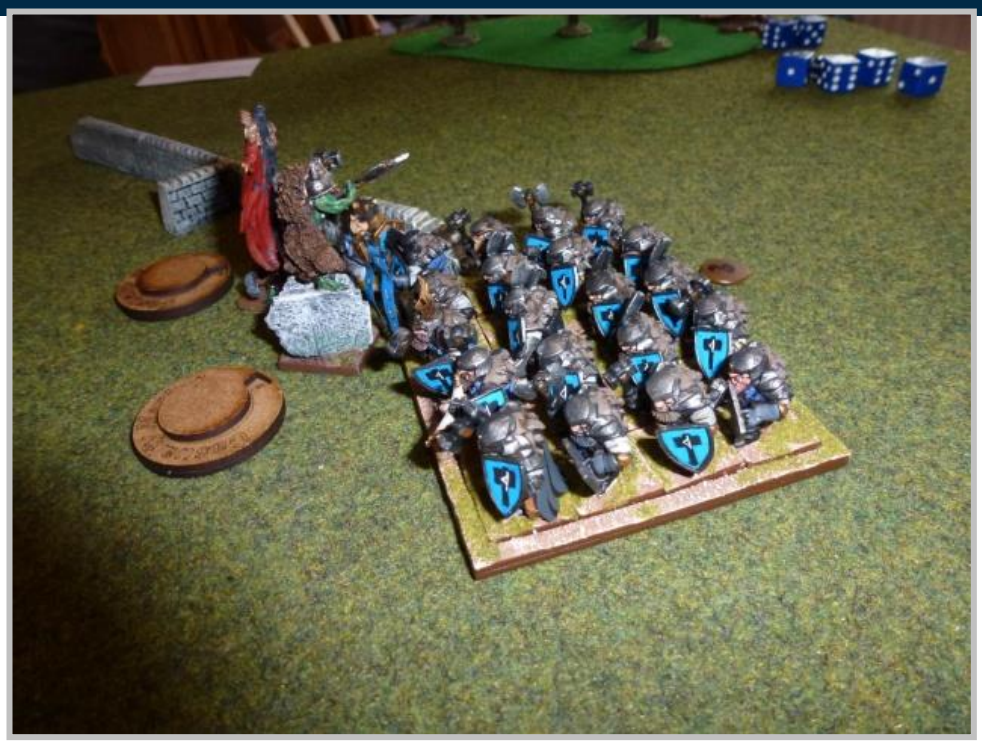
Conclusion

So a very good day, the four hours' drive was easily worth it for the two great games we got in. As Stuart has written the introduction I get to finish off with a conclusion, so here goes.

Firstly both games were played in a great spirit of friendly competition. We were both willing to point out rules that helped our opponents (although both of us forgot that the dwarf cannon had 'grapeshot' when my Orc flagger was standing right in front of it!) The dwarf army seemed balanced, though after the first battle we both agreed the cannon was a waste of points; yet it proved its worth in the more open killing fields of the second battle. I was generally pleased with my Orcs, the sniffs did what they do best, dying to protect the main units and holding up the enemy ready for charges from the horde. However, trying to be clever in the second game stopped me doing this. If both units of

Dwarven Gruffs prepare to charge the Orc flank

sniffs had been in front of the horde it would have been shielded from the dwarf missiles; wouldn't have been wavered, and so would have been able to turn to face the Gruff Riders. As it was, my divided army failed to support itself and was easily torn to pieces by the dwarves. Some Gore Riders would help, but the rest of the army works well, so I don't know what I would drop to make room. There's been quite a bit of talk on the forums about banners and musicians. There were several instances where my banners saved my units, and on at least two occasions I routed dwarves by one point thanks to a musician and the lack of Dwarven command.



The Dwarves rout the Orc commander

Definitely 25 points per unit well spent in my opinion.

600 points gave us enough for the battles to be interesting without them taking ages. I was surprised at how fast the second battle was, less than an hour in total. More open terrain probably helped, though it probably led to my downfall as well. Since I set up the terrain I can't blame anyone else.

What's next? Well I hope we will get another gaming day in around Easter. Probably 600pts again to try and fit two games in. I will be using my Orcs again, as Goreaxe the Thrudger flees out of dwarven lands he may well head into elven territory and

By Darren Lysenko

By Chris Schlumpberger

he's sure to collect a band of troops around him as he goes. If only we had more time or more opportunity I would suggest a small game followed by a larger battle, but I suspect that will have to wait until we are both retired. ▪

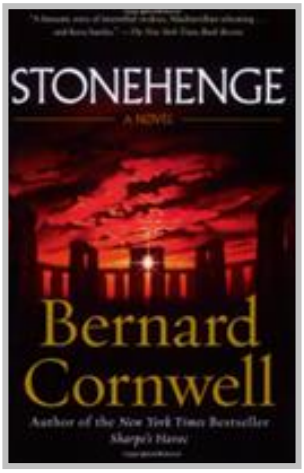
Finding Inspiration from Historical Fiction

By Neil Dixon

When looking for inspiration and ideas for my Kings of War battles, historical fiction has to be at the top of my list. I find reading a narrative of a battle aides me in visualising how it took place. When there is a great story and characters involved, it fires up my imagination even more.

The good thing about finding inspiration from historical battles is that you have a readymade map, objectives, victory conditions and even ideas for characters. After re-reading the description in the novel, I use other sources to get a better picture. I find reference books from the local library, websites and documentaries are useful for maps and detailed descriptions to help create my scenario. So, if you do not read historical fiction already, here are three of my top authors.

Bernard Cornwell

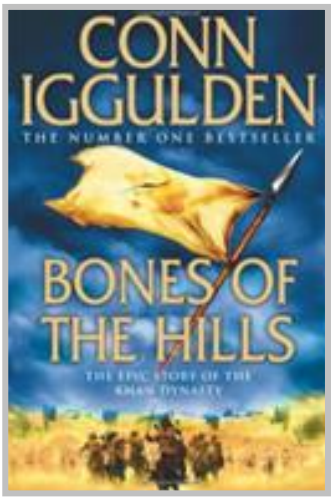


I cannot help finding ideas from Cornwell's action packed literature. As well as the celebrated Sharpe series, based in the Napoleonic era, he has written in in settings from Arthurian to the American Civil War. My favourite novel he has written has to be Stonehenge. Inside are some great ideas for an ambush featuring troops yet to be

By "imm0rtal reaper"

By Boris Samec

blooded and a rescue of a fair maiden, which would both make great small scale Fantasy scenarios. There is no doubt that Cornwell also creates excellent characters, usually rogues with good intentions at heart. Thomas of Hookton in the Grail Quest series is one of my favourites. An English archer with a mysterious past, he has forgone the church and has instead taken the life of war to seek the Holy Grail. A mind set easily adaptable for any good-aligned Kings of War character.



Conn Iggulden

The Conqueror series describes Genghis Khan, and how he redrew the map in the thirteenth century, whilst the Emperor series focuses on the Roman Empire. Both are epic, but the latter contains back stabbing politics and ruthless power struggles, all great fictional fodder. Khan's battles in the Conqueror series are described in vivid detail, and would make excellent ideas for Kings of War scenarios. Even the tactics of the differing armies are illustrated. The Mongol horsemen were excellent at harassing the foe, feigning weakness, and drawing them to commit to an attack at a disadvantage. They would then launch headlong into an assault and annihilate them. The series would also serve as a great basis for a map campaign. In the series, Genghis sets out to first dominate other Mongolian tribes, extends his conquests to Central Asia and Eastern Europe. It would be easy to substitute the armies described in the book for Kings of War forces and you have a series of linked battles, ready to fight.

Jack Hight

The Saladin Trilogy is set in the Crusades the Franks launched in the holy land where they fought the Muslims. It describes how Saladin rose to power, and his ambition to retake Jerusalem. There are some great descriptions of how the Franks, who were not equipped for the heat and terrain of the Middle East, would often suffer from the unseen enemy of fatigue, hunger and thirst. Making rules for attrition would add some great flavour to your Kings of War campaigns and battles, and reading the novel helped me visualise the effect it would have on an army. Descriptions of sieges are also

By "dusty"

prominent, and could be used in a Kings of War context.

Adapting Historical Battles to Create Scenarios

Here I recreate the Battle of Mohi, described in the Conqueror series by Conn Iggulden. I first paraphrased the description of the battle, ensuring I got a picture each army objective in my mind. I then set about recreating these objectives within Kings of War, resulting in what I think is an interesting and flavourful scenario.

The Scenario - Battle of Mohi in Kings of War

Captain Mikhail squinted at the river through his eyeglass. He relaxed in his saddle, chuckled to himself, and started setting up his smoking pipe. Overnight he had foiled an attempted ambush. The dawn mist had risen, and the bearded ones were now preparing for another attack. There was no way he could lose this battle he thought. His scouts reported how the half men looked tough, but his force outnumbered them nearly two to one. With his best troops defending the bridge, his main force would enjoy a leisurely breakfast of roast hog stolen from the village in which his army had fortified and made camp. If a few half men straggled over this side of the water, his rockets would see to them no problem.

Or so he thought…

The historical battle involved an invading Mongol army, pursuing a Hungarian force. The Hungarians were camped at the Sajo River, believing they were facing a Mongolian army that opposed little threat. Ignorant that a significantly larger number of troops than they realised lay further afield, the Hungarians struck out, hoping the catch the Mongols by surprise at night. They caught a Mongol force crossing the bridge, ready for a dawn attack.

The Hungarians were victorious, defeating the Mongol raiding force with crossbowmen. A contingent was left guarding the bridge, whilst the remaining Hungarians retreated to their camp to celebrate their victory. The Mongols sent a force of catapults with the main force to dislodge the crossbowmen and retake the bridge. The superior Mongolian that was not scouted by the Hungarians force was sent to outflank the Hungarian army, building an additional crossing to the south of the river.

The Hungarians were defeated at the bridge, retreated and alerted the main army of a

raid. Half the force was mobilised, but were overwhelmed by the main Mongol force. Meanwhile, the second Mongol force in the south launched a counter attack in the flank, which decimated the Hungarians.

During the playtest, I fought as the attacker with my Dwarfs. Kingdom of Men substituted for the Hungarians as defenders. Any armies can be used, though you may have to modify elements of the scenario to achieve a balanced game.

Armies & Set up

The attacking force is 1800 points, and the defending force is 1300 points. Use a 6' x 4' table. The defender dedicates at least one unit, and approximately up to 25% of their total army points to defending the bridge. The attacker must split his force in two, dedicating approximately 50% of the total army points to attacking from the south east, and 50% attacking from the north. The main defending force sets up in the south west corner.

Terrain

Bridge: Wide enough for one regiment to move across at no penalty, counts as difficult terrain for hordes. The north bridge is an objective.

Woods: Count as difficult terrain.

River Sajo: Count as impassable.

Village of Mohi: Contains four houses, treated as normal buildings. Each is an objective.

Walls: Treat as obstacles.

Starting the Battle

Each player rolls a dice, the lowest rolling player setting up a unit first. Each army then takes it in turns to place their units. The defender can deploy from forces A or C. The attacker only deploys force D. Force B is engaged building an additional river crossing to outflank the defending army. The force sets up at the start of turn 2.

Deployment Area Key

A – Set up at least one unit, or up to 25% of defending force points on or within 3" of the north bridge.

B – 50% of attacking force deploys from turn 2 onwards in the east corner in an area 24" x 12".

C – Remaining defender units set up in an area 36" x 12" in the south west corner.

D – The attacker deploys 50% of his force 8" on to the north table edge.

Setup

Both players roll a dice. The player with the highest chooses whether to take the first turn.

By Michael Defranco

Victory Conditions

A. The army which has at least one unit (not individuals) within 3" of the bridge, with no enemy units within 3" of the bridge at the end of the battle scores 180 victory points.

B. Killing the most expensively pointed character in the opposing army scores victory points equivalent to the cost of the character multiplied by two. If two or more characters in one or both armies are equal points, randomise before deployment which is the target.

By "left64"

C. Each house counts as 180 victory points for the army which has at least one unit (not individuals) within 3", and there are no enemy units within 3" of the house at the end of the battle. A single unit can only capture one house.

The army which has most victory points at the end of the game wins.

Game Length

At the end of turn 6 roll a D6. On a roll of 4 or more the game continues for one more turn. ▪

By Boris Samec

LAST OF THE BROKKYR

By Michael Grey

The ordnance punctured the atmosphere. Successive layers of ablative armour disintegrated under pressurised friction, protecting the payload as it blasted through exosphere, thermosphere, mesosphere, stratosphere.

It made airfall, rending the sky with a crack like thunder, leaving tracts of burning oxygen in short lived contrails. Thunderheads and clouds passed, rendered imperceptible by velocity, making way for a landscape made dark by smoke and blood.

Below, snaking down the centre of a rift valley, a line of infantry and armour clambered like ants over the wrecked landscape to reach their enemy. The scene was there for a fraction of a second before the missile, descending at ear-splitting speed, hit the ground like god's fist.

The impact killed hundreds, shredding skin with debris and burning the air in their lungs. Thousands more were thrown from their feet as the ground shook, symptomatic of a foreign object invading the body of a planet.

The bomb dug. Its final layer of protection, elongated, toothed and rotating, buried down, using the massive momentum of the fall to push the ordnance further and further. The impressive inertia was brought to heel by the planet's iron-heavy crust, and the object stopped.

And exploded.

Robbed of air, sound energy altered its nature adding to the expanding wave of force outward and upward.

The mantel shook, cracked, split. Giant fissures opened on the surface. The battle

above stopped as the ground opened up. The valley rolled under the death throes of a planet. And if any were in the position to pull their eyes up they would see more contrails, burning down from the sky to pound into the earth.

Above the air burned with a sudden crosshatch of laser fire

****

Bruun fell to his knees. The earth shook, bucking in great hiccups. Training told him to cover his head or find the nearest bolt hole, but his senses told him this was more than an artillery barrage. There were no impact reports, and it went on longer than it should.

The shaking intensified, and an ancestral fear gripped him cold.

Earthquake.

He closed his eyes and pushed the fear down. He had his message to deliver. That was more important than grovelling in the dirt. There was no stone above his head. He was here, out in the open, and there were other things which would kill him if he did not move.

He pushed himself up, forced a step. And another.

Behind him, far behind, were cries. Anger and pain mixed in their curiously similar tones. Say what you would of the humans; they made the same sounds as Bruun's people when shot.

But these sounds were too close, their position made indeterminate by battle's discord, and he had his message.

He ran, keeping low. Above the air burned with a sudden crosshatch of laser fire. Too high to be meant for him, but still he pushed his legs harder.

The sky was blinded by filthy clouds, black and purple with chemical fires. The sun was

By Chris Schlumpberger

put out and he would not be able to navigate by that. But he had excellent senses with direction. All his people did. All he had to do was-

By Boris Samec

Something landed metres behind. Something big. The ground shook and he began to fall again, but was saved from that when whatever it was exploded. Bruun was saved by some upthrust of earth, the rock taking the brunt of the shockwave, but not enough that he was not picked up and flung like a doll.

Time slowed, the lay of the land revealed itself as he flew, allowing him in some dumb *when I land* state of mind to appreciate where he should run and where the enemy lay. And then he became aware of the cliff edge rising up to meet him. It felt like he fell through sap, the crag approaching at a leisurely pace. But he could not bring his arms forward. He would hit that cliff, and there was nothing he could do about it.

He struck it chest first. The impact blew the air from his lungs and brought time up to speed. His head struck then, his helmet saving his life as his skull thumped inside it, sending his vision and his world black.

****

His mother held out the box. It was a simple thing; a quartz oblong, half the length of his arm. Inside it was hollow and inlayed with a soft blue cloth. The blue of Brokkyr.

He could not bring his arms forward. He would hit that cliff, and there was nothing he could do about it

His mother held the lid open. He could not see the hinges. A secret of the Brokkyr craft hall, one they would not share, along with the technique for its locking. Once the lid was closed, it would never again open.

There was a finality in that thought. One which reached beyond the box itself, and

rubbed against his mind trying to get his attention.

Bruun looked up at his mother. Her eyes, so usually reserved for critique and disappointment, wrinkled at the corners in a way he could only assume was pride. It would only be a guess because he had only seen it when she held similar boxes, almost identical, in the same ceremony for his other brothers who had taken up arms for Brokkyr. Many of those brothers were here now.

Should his physical body not return, he would forever remain here among

Along with his few sisters. They radiated out in a half circle from their mother. Some were smiling at him, supportive, encouraging. Some, those for the most part wearing marshal uniform, were not. Most noticeable were those not there. It was for them, and the reason their absence, he was there now. Standing before an empty box.
He looked into it once more. It seemed deeper on the inside than its dimensions should allow. A light's trick, perhaps? Perhaps.

The thought almost made him smile. But here, now, in this place, it was not appropriate.

What the box would contain was him. The essence of him. Once closed it would be

By Chris Schlumpberger

placed in the family's vault, with his brothers, uncles and sires, reaching back through generations. And, should his physical body not return, he would forever remain here among the Brokkyr.

He had walked that vault many times before. More than was necessary, socially speaking. Rows upon rows of shelves, of boxes, of etched plaques. All looking down on him. It was comforting. More than once he found himself speaking to the boxes of his brothers who had not returned, finding solace in the thought they could hear him.

But now, looking at the box held up by his expectant mother, it looked like nothing more than an empty box. And he wondered if it was meant for him, or for his family.

By Boris Samec

He looked his mother in the eye, raised his hand to his mouth, and breathed into the half formed fist. He moved his hand to just above the box and opened his fingers.

The box snapped shut with a sound like…

****

The sounds of battle raged. Chugging automatic fire and the sharp report of higher calibre rounds.

…an explosion which brought him back to consciousness. He opened his eyes. Closed them again, painful under the gun metal sky. Clouds hung low, brooding under a weight of chemical smoke, but even so it hurt to look.

He blinked tears and rolled onto his side. Pain constricted his muscles and he felt like vomiting. He choked the urge back and rose to his knees, and then his feet.

His message!

He checked. Still there, safe and sound.

He orientated himself, and began to move. First with hesitance; testing each

footfall, fearful of twisting an ankle or worse, making his journey all the more difficult; then with alacrity. He broke into a loping jog he could keep up for days.

He dare not look back, putting all his focus into running

To his right the sounds of battle raged. Chugging automatic fire and the sharp report of higher calibre rounds. But that was it off to the north and the intervening ground muted the noise, muffling it until it held a strangely dreamlike quality. One he could ignore as he ran.

The air above him tore as two Valkyr bombers streaked towards the front. Low enough that he could see their payload doors open to drop hurt on the humans. He could have whooped and punched the air as the bomblets released and rained down.

A staccato cracking told him the munitions hit as the Valkyrs banked, turning back towards him. That was when he saw them. Three missiles, their trail of smoke and fire larger than the warheads, rose up from some unseen patch of ground to the north and changed trajectory, making for the bombers.

A prescience made him focus on the centre missile. It swiftly outpaced the other two, reaching forward as if in eagerness. He knew what would happen before it did.

The missile caught the rearmost Valkyr almost playfully, and exploded with a licking ball of orange fire. The flyer bucked, tipped nose-first as its hind reared.

By Chris Schlumpberger

By Boris Samec

Bruun thought they were returning to rearm, but a second payload detonated in the bomber's rear, peeling the armour apart and shattering its nubbed front end free.

It was that end which quickly lost its altitude, and fell towards Bruun.

He ran. He thought he was running fast before, but now he hauled himself over the broken ground as if he had no breath of later. He dare not look back, putting all his focus into running.

He risked a swift look. The burning flyer's nose was close enough for him to read the chassis runes.

Before him the ground rose sharply, an upthrust of rock around a huge impact crater. He threw himself up, grabbed, pulled, and fell down the opposite bank as the nose crashed into the other side with a ground shaking explosion.

Who can say? The humans, they reach for what they want, and they want everything

Alive.

He was alive!

He stood on unsteady legs, and looked up to see humans staring at him.

****

Commander Huscarl Dron gave them the news. He did it as he should; levelly, with no inflection, trusting in Bruun and Dvalinn to take it as Brokkyr. Especially so now.

Dvalinn blinked. "All of them?"

Huscarl Dron nodded. "I'm afraid so, lad."

Dvalinn accepted the confirmation with a nod and shifted his stare to empty air. He was broken. It may not show on the outside,

By Chris Schlumpberger

but Bruun knew his battle brother, and Dvalinn would be forever ruined.

"An what say you, lad?" Bruun had been unaware the Huscarl was looking at him, unaware he had said nothing. It was all too huge. Too numbing. What was there to say? He managed to croak, "Why?"

"Who can say? The humans, they reach for what they want, and they want everything. Brokk was just in their way. They bombarded it from orbit. There's nothing that could have been done."

"I want," began Dvalinn, then stopped, turned away, thought on this words, then looked back. "I want revenge."

The Huscarl's moustache curled up in the grimmest of smiles. "You will have that chance."

****

There were three of them. Two were on the crater's floor, one propped against the opposite side. That one appeared deflated and pale, even for a human. Its bare face looked at him in a way that was too pained to care of his arrival. The next was on its knees before the first. It wore the white tabard of the human's apothecaries, with a bloodied palm print soaking the fabric. It held some kind of implement in its hands and what could have been a fearful look on its face.

The third, the last, was standing, and held one of their impossibly thin rifles.

His roll down the crater's side came to an end and Bruun stood, half crouched, ready to run but scared what that would prompt. He had his message. It had to get through. And he had no weapons.

It had looked for authority and not raised its weapon. That spoke of fear, and fear was unpredictable

The closest human, the one with the rifle, seemed as unsure as Bruun. He flicked a look back to the apothecary then back to him. A visor covered his face so Bruun could only guess at its intentions, but it had looked for authority and not raised its weapon. That spoke of fear, and fear was unpredictable.

Could he reach the human before it fired? He judged the distance. It looked too far. And if its friends decided to join in he would surely die.

The decision was made when it went to raise its rifle. Its body gave the intention away before the weapon moved, a tensing around its middle and slight squat in its thighs. Bruun was at a dead run before the rifle barrel could come up. The human's always seemed unready for how quickly his kind could move, and this one was no exception. It panicked at his charge and fired too soon. The blasts ate the ground before Bruun's legs, kicked dirt up into his face. He ran on, ignored the stinging in his eyes and jumped.

By Boris Samec

There was a wet crunch as the windpipe collapsed and the kicking stopped.

His greater mass barrelled the human over. They fell with Bruun on its chest. The human brought its hand up in defence, the rifle now the bone of contention between them. Bruun's hands gripped the weapon on either side of the human's. It tried to force the barrel around to Bruun's face, Bruun forcing it back.

He heaved with all his strength, bringing his weight up and then down. The force overcame the human's muscles and the rifle dropped until the barrel was across its throat. Bruun kept pushing down, pushing and pushing. A wet grinding shook through the rifle and up his arms as the weapon choked the human. It struggled under him, kicking, its hands alternately trying to push the barrel up or reach for Bruun's face. Its mouth was open, issuing wet gasps. Bruun did his best to ignore them. It made the human too… too like him and his own.

The life was leaching out of the human, and at the last Bruun closed his eyes and pushed harder. There was a wet crunch as the windpipe collapsed and the kicking stopped. Only then did Bruun open his eyes. And remember the other two.

They had not moved. The one lying down did not look able, but the apothecary was armed, a pistol strapped to one thigh. But it had not moved, the instrument he held before was still in its hands. When Bruun looked at them it shifted slightly, moving between him and the injured human. An oddly empathetic gesture which spoke to Bruun.

Bruun had seen too many battles to count...Where one fight would meld into another, did you count that as one or two?

He could reach them before the apothecary reached his pistol, he was sure of that. Or he could use the rifle in his hands. Instead he just looked.

When he did not move the apothecary lifted one hand up, palm towards him.

That that blasted landscape of chaotic violence, Bruun saw the human's hand tremble.

He neither shook or nodded his head. He didn't know if the human would recognise either gesture. He simply stood, dropped the rifle, and left the crater.

****

Commander Huscarl Dron was dead now. His own promise of vengeance unfulfilled, cut short by anti-aircraft fire. Bruun was beside Dron in the drop craft. The violent bucking of a ship air-breaking through atmosphere suddenly took on a more serious, less predictable character, just before the aircraft split in two, severing down the middle between Bruun's seat and Huscarl Dron's. No squeal of metal, no incandescent. One moment they were together, holding onto the restraints and

By "Skolo"

By Boris Samec

trying to take some of the buffeting in their arms, the next air whistled in Bruun's ears, tugged at his hair. To one side, where Huscarl Dron and the rest of his battle brothers had been was a roiling vortex of biting night air and the hint of a shadow disappearing into the clouds.

Dvalinn was dead too. The war for the Brokkyr home worlds heaved on, taking in every patch of rocky ground in the systems and the gulfs of space between. Together Dvalinn and Bruun had seen too many battles to count. Literally, too many. Where one fight would meld into another, did you count that as one or two? However many they were, Dvalinn had been at his side.

They were the last two. There was never a question it could be any other way.

Dvalinn at least had accounted for some of the humans invading their home. But what were a few dozen enemy in the face of hundreds of thousands?

It had not been the glorious death Dvalinn wanted. A night time camp. An errant sniper. Dvalinn was there; standing, talking, brooding. Dvalinn. A flash and a crack and Dvalinn fell. One shot took from the universe Bruun's last connection to his home. To who he was.

This far from the front sentries were few and Bruun slipped between their cocky patrols easily

Dvalinn was gone, and then there was only him. The last of the Brokkyr.

****

He was close now. The end of his journey, where he would deliver his message.

Before him a command tower rose. Matt dark, seeming to drink in the night. Too tall

to be a bunker, its height projected ownership of the land around. This far from the front sentries were few and Bruun slipped between their cocky patrols easily, staying to shadows, squeezing between multi-wheeled vehicles, behind them all and into the tower.

Molecular bonds would be encapsulated and then shattered driving the nitrogen atoms apart, releasing the primal force which keeps the universe together

The stairs were high, coming nearly to his knees. One final, mercifully small obstacle before the end.

The stairs ended in a bulkhead with a wheeled lock one might see in an old ship. It hung partly open. Bruun stepped silently through into a room ringed by windows, reflective black in the night, and dominated by a central table too high for him to see clearly, but he knew it would hold the map of Brokkyr. Around it; humans. Seven of them. Two in the long brown coats of their officers, the others in the impractical, delicate clothes of those who gave orders to the brown coats.

Bruun's lips curled into a smile, his first in… years? Yes, years.

The humans started at the clank of the heavy door closing. The surprise at seeing Bruun there, in their home, rooted them still.

A few, the ones in the fine clothes, began to chatter in their slight language, directing whatever they said to the two commanders, pointing at him and outside. The two brown coats though did not move. They eyed him warily.

Bruun became aware he was speaking. Reciting names one after another. *Baalin, Mak, Duala, Ullua, Dram.* His brothers, his sisters, his mother. He spoke as he pulled his gloves free, where he held his message in one palm.

Mikala, Born, Bjorn, Grokla, Tusock.

By "skolo"

The brown coats realised they were in danger now, even if they did not know its nature. Urgency overcame fear and they ran to cabinets on the walls, tugging frantically at the handles.

Bruun brought his hands to his front, before his chest, a hand span apart. One facing up, one down. In the lower palm he held his message. A regraded francium-based silica gel. Once pressed the film would break, absorbing into his flesh to react with the water in his body. Molecular bonds would be encapsulated and then shattered driving the nitrogen atoms apart, releasing the primal force which keeps the universe together. A chain reaction would follow through his body, converting the bonds into heat energy, leap frogging onto every other carbon atom for tens of kilometres around, splintering each in turn until there would be nothing but a short lived ball of pure white energy and an explosion to rival the birth of a star.

By Boris Samec

It was enough revenge for him and Dvalinn to share.

He closed his eyes.

Gvala, Ytuck, Fala, Gron. Dvalinn.

He opened his eyes.

Brokkyr.

And brought his hands together.▪

For more stories like this, visit Michael's blog at www.michaelgrey.com.au

By Matt Gilbert

Battle of Gallohell

By Jason Flint

Lord Elethor was not amused. Standing around waiting for the master of the guard was just insulting. He was renowned in this area and the ignorance of the men was in his eyes, unbelievable. The petty whining of messengers from border counties was not worthy of the high lords of Golden Horns attention, so they came here to the guard house to plead for soldiers to deal with threats. He was not here for aid, and while he respected the men's fighting ability, they hardly suited his style of warfare. Shouting loudly and covering yourself in plate that offered no more protection than his fine Elven armor, but was four times the weight, was hardly progress.

The messenger in front of him was next, and his words caught the irritable Elves attention. After the usual dramatic pleas the man mentioned something about some wretched town called Gallohell. But it was not that which got his attention.

"Master of the guard, this mage, Orecarno has formed a pact with wildmen, goblins, but worse, he has a fleet! Dark Elven warriors set sail for Gallohell as we speak! They will sack it and burn it to the ground!"

"You have a large garrison, we have sent knights of Falkerk to watch over the construction of the wall already! A small raiding party and a few corpses are not

worthy of our attention! You should have executed this foul being when you had the chance! Be gone!" came the angry response.

The messenger left, clearly traumatized at the public humiliation. Elethor was summoned, but he looked after the messenger. He'd found what he was looking for. Only that damn Wolfcurse would be so bold. The feuding was bitter, not at all helped by his foes insistence on calling true Elves, "weedy".

"Never mind" he murmured as he made off after the messenger

‘My Lord, a messenger for the fleet’ announced his personal guard

‘Send him in’ he replied looking up from his war map

You should have executed this foul being when you had the chance!

‘My lord’ the messenger said kneeling on the floor ‘The Dark Talon sends reports of an elven fleet making its way up the coast towards the harbor east of Gallohell’

‘Hmmm seems our brethren feel that this kingdom is worth protecting,. Whose banner flies?

‘The fleet fly the banner of High General Elethor and the flag ship is said to fly his personal house banner, My Lord’.

By Jonathan Faulkes

‘The weedy Elf himself is on his way here to try and stop me" he laughed "Interesting indeed,. How many days out are they?’

‘About 2 days to the harbor, and another 2 days to Gallohell itself My Lord’

‘Good, four days is more than enough time to end this and then prepare to meet Elethor in the field. Take these orders back to The Dark Talon; They are to engage using skirmish and delaying tactics on the elven fleet try to delay them or leave boats behind, so no large scale engagements. Also, inform the Black Heart and Kraken to send their Buccaneers raiding along the coast close to the harbor, only taking strong and breedable slaves. Put all other to the sword and burn them down, making sure there is lots of black smoke. Lets give the men and elves something to worry about: Do they split their forces to save the innocents or do they let them suffer to maximize there forces against us in the field?’ A cruel smile parted his lips ‘Also inform the necromancer Orecarno that he can have what ever is left of the coast villages for his ‘experiments.’ That should demoralize the enemy before we even engage.’

By “Daedle”

Inform the Black Heart and Kraken to send their Buccaneers raiding along the coast

---

The black clad warrior stood in front of him, and with his twin blades, he lunged. Too eager, as Elethor brought his great weapon swinging in a wide arc, cleaving the Elf in 2 and soaking his decks in more blood. The last would-be boarder defeated, he observed his ship. Its once-elegant looks were now tarnished from the carnage, and the deck was so awash in so much gore it was a struggle to stay upright while his large, beautifully crafted sails were torn. He looked annoyed as he saw the rest of his fleet had not been touched. The surviving Twilight Kin were quickly disengaging.

"Why attempt to board only us, then flee? Why not try to break our fleet?" came the enquiry of his Seaguard warriors, who now sported dented shields.

"They try to slow us. Someone warned them we were coming; It will not work. Get those sails replaced, we make for Gallohell with all haste!"

Wolfcurse heard his guards snap to attention, and he looked up from his map to face the most beautiful, lithe and naked Kin he had ever seen, if not for the fact she was dripping with gore from head to toe,

'Ah my Lady of Blades you honor me with your presence.' He shuddered inwardly as his survival instinct told him he was in danger.

'Lord Wolfcurse this is purely a business visit, no time for pleasure I'm afraid.' An evil smile split her crimson smeared lips as she flicked a look at the ornate dagger in her hand still dripping onto the carpet of his tent. 'Be aware that my sisters and I have appeased our allies and they will be joining us in the forthcoming battle.'

By Jason Flint

'Excellent my thanks you my lady,' as he gave a small bow, 'They will prove to be a great asset in the coming days. Also, it has been brought to my attention that the weedy Elf himself makes his way here to bring us to battle.'

'Really?' she purred, 'Well that both pleases and excites me. It's been far too long since we last danced with his elite guard.' She let out a small laugh.

'My lord!' A messenger rushed into the tent, breathless. 'News from the North…' He stopped abruptly as a beautiful but bloody hand gripped him by the neck and a dagger was placed a short distance from his eye.

Get those sails replaced, we make for Gallohell with all haste!

'My Lady, please allow him to speak before you teach him the errors of his rudeness'

'Very well, be quick. I grow bored, worm,' she growled as she pushed the messenger to his knees, and gripped him by his hair, raising his head and exposing his throat.

'Speak and quickly. My Lady does not like to wait.'

'My Lord…. The Northern Orc tribes have moved early but have marched towards the Dwarven hold of Scrag Beard.'

By Matt Gilbert

'What of the Goblins?'

'They hold in the lower foothills still, my lord'

'Very well, this is not a disaster. The Orcs will hold the Dwarf forces up, reducing the number of both the defenders and the overall Orc population; Saves us two tasks. My Lady, I have a favor to ask of you, if you will? Please, can your sisters and yourself take up position in the foot hills and keep the Goblins in check? This will also put you in the best position to attack the flanks of Elethors forces.'

'My Lord, that seems like a reasonable trade. Now what of this one?' she asked, drawing a line of blood along the messenger's check.

'In honor of the relations between the temple and my house, I offer him into your humble care and service, though I politely request you deal with him outside of the tent, my lady.'

A slight expression of irritation crossed her face 'As you wish my lord. Good day, and may the blood comet bless your house.'

'As it blesses the temple and our Kin,' he replied automatically, not wishing to push his luck.

He watched her stride from the tent dragging the now whimpering and sobbing messenger behind her as if he was nothing more than a disobedient child.

She pushed the messenger to his knees, and gripped him by his hair, raising his head and exposing his throat

He shuddered, trying to push the fate of the messenger out of his mind, and turned back to his map, moving a few of the marker around,

'Guard, go summon my commanders. We have much to discuss'

'Yes, my lord.'

‘Yes, it’s coming together nicely now, with a full blood comet passing overhead in four days, on the dawn of the attack, in addition to his new allies, hindering the Dwarven reinforcements and reducing their numbers, Gallohell has no choice but to surrender or fall; Not even Elethor can deny me my ancestral right to raid this area.’ He grinned at the thought of the upcoming slaughter; Yes, it will be glorious and profitable.

Good day, and may the blood comet bless your house

Gallohell smelt funny, Elethor concluded. The humans armories had worked day and night forging and fixing the garrisons weapons and armor. The large amount of horses and lack of stables meant they were tied up where ever there was space. It was a familiar smell of war, but didn't seem to suit this apparent market town. He sighed as he saw the Dwarven architect sat lazily outside the tavern, his only focus being stuffing his pipe.

"Where are the others?" Elethor demanded as he marched over, his guard following.

"The warriors will be here when they get here" murmured the Dwarf, still focused on his pipe.

"Listen Dwarf" Elethor scowled, "These are your walls we're protecting here, and I have committed a huge portion of my army, and all I see are builders, not warriors!"

The Dwarf finally raised his head, and looked up at Elethor, who was shocked the Dwarf was able to lift his head that high. He still believed Dwarves had no necks.

"And you listen to me Elf, the words been sent; There is nothing else for me to do. And if this is your contribution," he waved towards the assembled Elven warriors who were marching through the streets, "Then these men are doomed. You have no cavalry and few war machines, and those you have parading through the street would rather be on a boat than land"

The Dwarf went back to his pipe, and Elethor quickly turned and marched towards the

By “Sukura636”

By Jonathan Faulkes

unfinished wall.

"You let him speak to you like that?" his guard ventured.

"Only because he's right," Elethor mused as he looked out past the wall at the dust cloud in the distance. He needed more warriors but he had none; What else could he do? Then he spotted the deep forests to the East.

"Get the mage, I have an idea"

Orecarno looked over his marching horde. In a short space of time, he'd gone from dwelling and experimenting in the ruins of Difetth, to raising an army from the ground. He was making pacts with anything greedy enough to be happy to march alongside the dead, and now marched on his hated foes; The men who dared cast him out, who said what he did was wicked and evil. Foolish and backwards views of men who were afraid of him. Now they will quake in their boots at the sight of his accomplishments.

He was irritated, however, at the Twilight Kin's reluctance to march with him. Despite giving them huge cuts of whatever wealth could be taken from Gallohell, they insisted on meeting him there. No doubt they wished to pillage and burn bordering villages.

It was a familiar smell of war, but didn't seem to suit this apparent market town

In the distance he could make out the town's walls. They were tall, but unfinished. He could see huge gaps where gates had yet to be put in. He had timed it well, this wouldn't

be a protracted siege; This would be resolved in a day.

The Dwarves had arrived. Elethor didn't trust anything that considered ankles a valid target in a fight, but he was grateful for more boots in the defense. They were quickly making wild boasts of what they'd accomplished and insisted this was a minor skirmish compared to their journey here. The younger men were gathered listening intently, but he noted the human veterans, clad in plate stood elsewhere. They didn't appear to be talking or boasting, with the only giveaway that they were exchanging words beneath their helms was the occasional nod.

"Lord Elethor!"

He turned and saw garrison commander Paldrik approach. A knight, a wealthy one at that. His plate ornate and expensive, and his sheathed sword seemed to be glowing. A trick of the light maybe.

"My scouts say they will be here in hours, . What news of your mage?"

By "Dusty"

He spotted the deep forests to the East.

"Get the mage, I have an idea."

"Be patient, he will return."

At that, there were shouts from the wall. Panicked men screamed of approaching monsters, and the Dwarves grabbed their axes and eagerly ran forward to the wall. Elethor ran faster though, and saw what had caused the panic. What appeared to be 2 huge hulking trees

Elethor didn't trust anything that considered ankles a valid target in a fight

were taking great strides towards the city walls.

"Hold your fire, they are here to help!"

The tree herders halted and remained eerily still, and Andrel the mage rode forward, looking immensely smug. Elethor noticed the Dwarf architect from earlier was at the front, a look of awe visible even with his large beard.

"My final contribution" he hissed at the Dwarf as he made his way back inside. It was time to mount up on his Dragon, as out of the corner of his eye he'd seen the horde form up on the hill. The Battle of Gallohell was about to begin.▪

By Boris Samec

By Michael Defranco

Clash of Kings
Daedlehs Rampaging Hordes

By Daedle

I had my first game with my clash of kings at the War & Peace Games Club opening night. It was a blast.

I have painted all my models for this months blog, but I'm still trying to figure out decent camera settings to take a photo of them all.

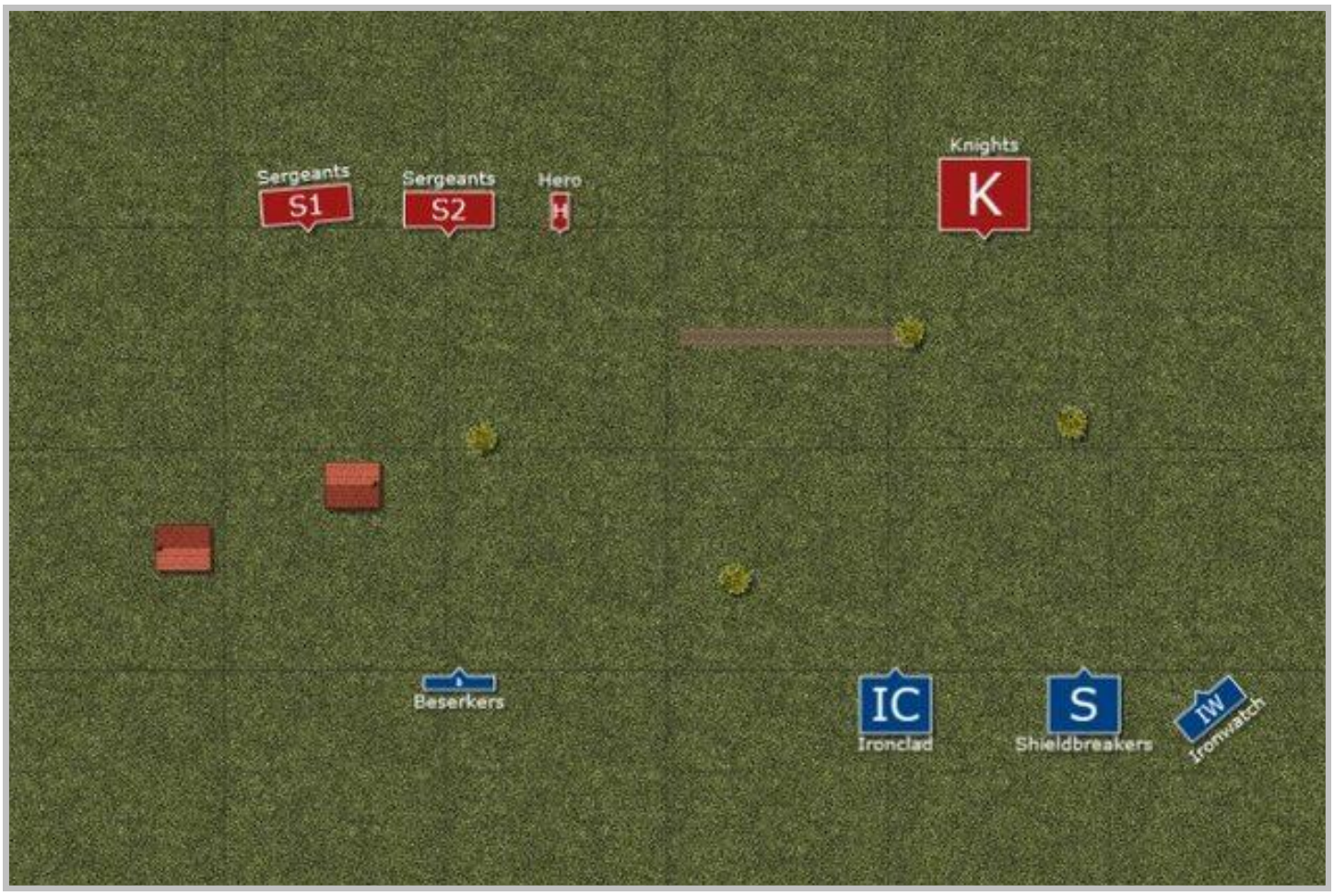
My list was:
Knights Regiment w/Command
Mounted Sergeants troop w/Command
Mounted Sergeants troop w/Command
Hero w/Horse

His Dwarf list was:
20 Ironclad
20 Shieldbreakers
10 Ironwatch
5 Berserkers

It was a very small game, but I just didn't have enough models for anything bigger.

I deployed my knights first hoping, correctly, that he'd deploy his army against them. I deployed my sergeants and hero out on the flank.

His army was clustered in the corner, with the berserkers out on their lonesome on the other side.



Deployment before Turn 1

Deployment before Turn 1

Turn 1

He won first turn. And took it. Before he realized that his Ironwatch were out of range and he didn't really want to advance towards me. So he did nothing in his first turn.

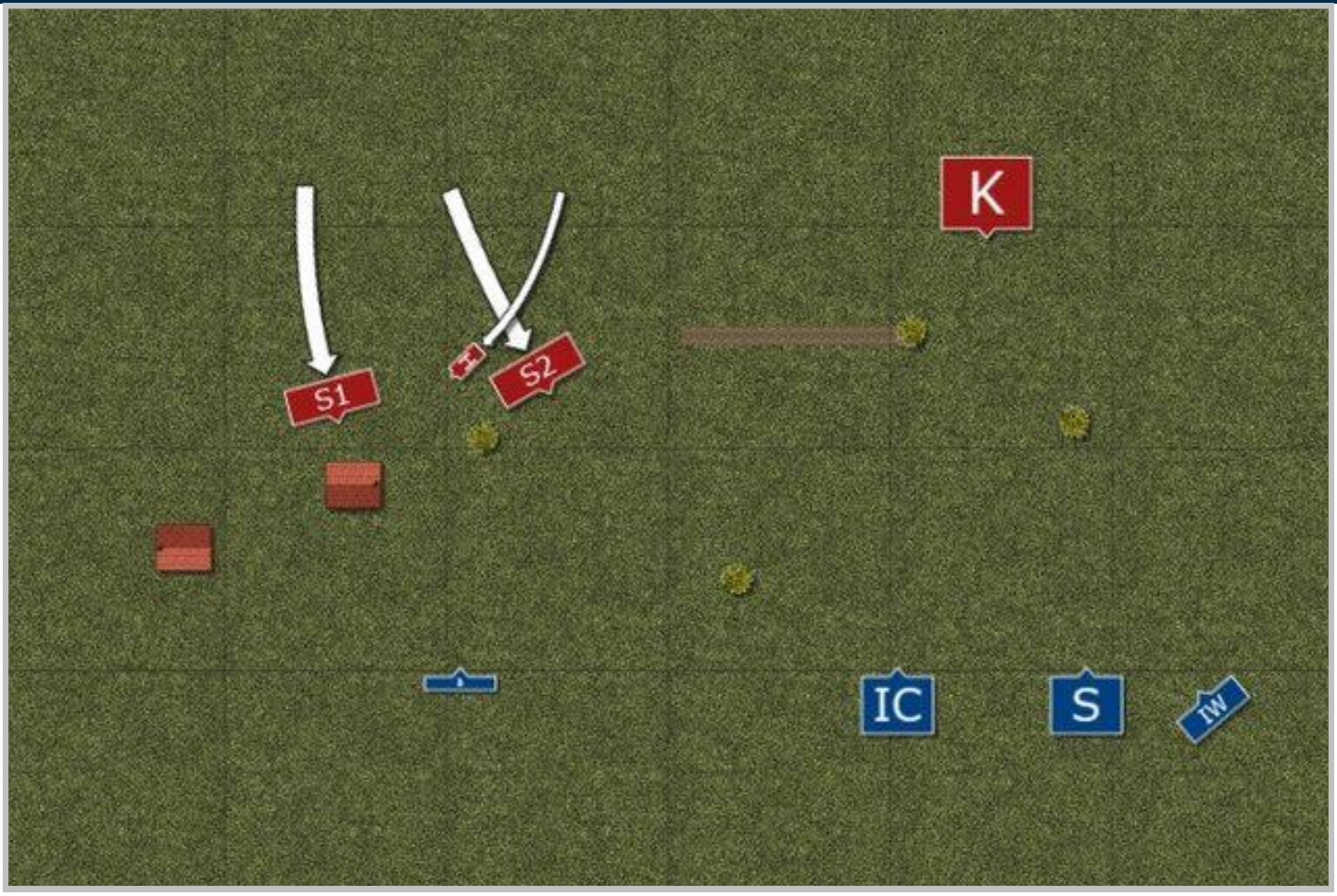
I didn't want to move my knights into range of his Ironwatch so kept them where they were, but moved the sergeants and hero up on their flank, hoping to put a charge on his berserkers in the next turn. Stupidly I moved the very left hand Sergeants right up to a building meaning that the champions line of sight was blocked. D'oh!

Turn 2

In his second turn he moved the whole army up.

I was now in charge range, so I charged one of the Sergeants and the Knights into his

By "osbad"



Turn 1

By Jack Evans

Ironclad unit and they absolutely. demolished. it. After rolling the dice for my Sergeants I was pretty chuffed with how good they were in combat. I rolled for my Knights. Oh. My God. OUCH.

The Ironclad were destroyed in a single front charge.

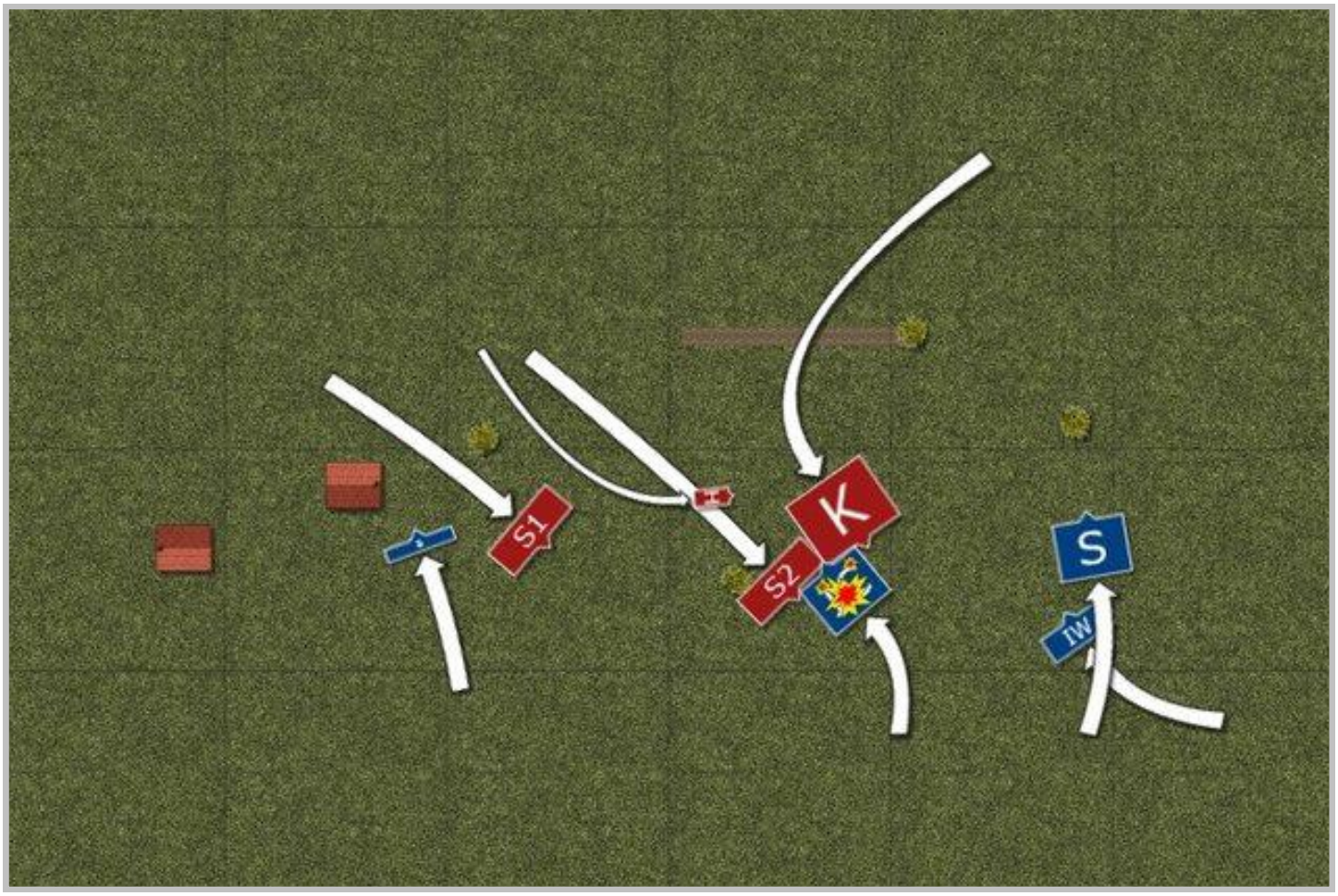
Turn 3

For his turn 3 he moved the berserkers up, but was out of charge range, and turned the Shieldbreakers around to face my army, ready to charge next turn. His Ironwatch shot at the Knights at managed to inflict 3 damage, but the knights passed their nerve check so stayed.

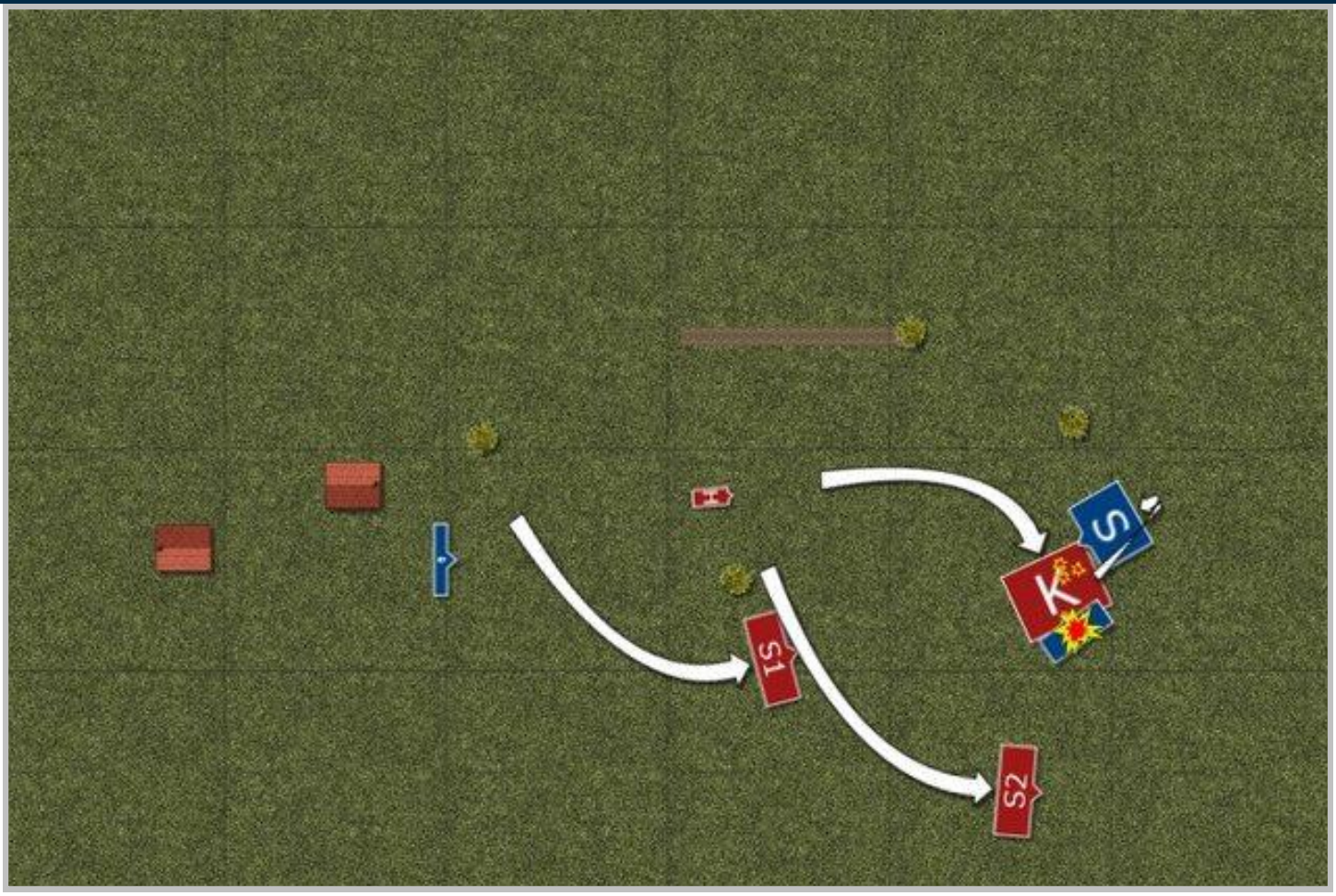
For my turn 3, I moved the sergeants down the table to face off against the Shieldbreakers and I charged the Ironwatch with my Knights, hoping to break them in one turn and to be able to move straight on out of the front arc of the Shieldbreakers. It worked.

My memory's a little fuzzy here I'm afraid. Somehow (I think there was another turn involved), I managed to wheel my knights around and charged them and one of the sergeants into the Shieldbreakers, and my Sergeants either charged or

By "badgertheking"



Turn 2



Turn 3

were charged by his Berserkers. Both Dwarf units were wiped out without doing any more damage to my army.

Left on the board I had my entire army, with a whole 3 points of damage on Knights.

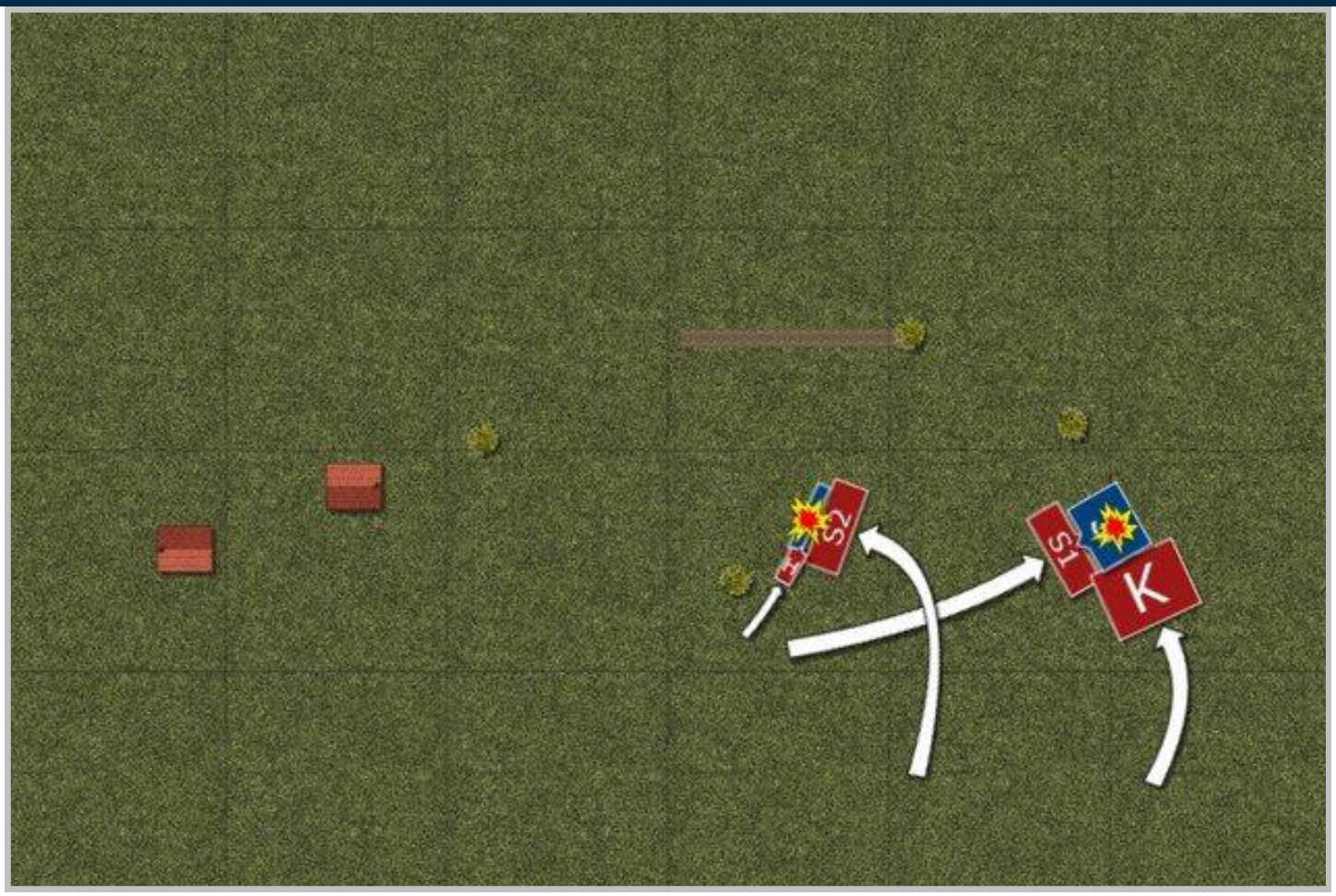
VICTORY!!!

We both agreed that cavalry armies are extremely powerful when they have the open space to move as they wish without the enemy force being able to put significant pressure on them. We noted that we were playing a very small game on a very large board, and a 1,800 point game on the same size board would have left me very little room to maneuver.

By "puggimer"

By Chris Schlumpberger

Turn 3



Somewhere between Turn 4 or 5

Rematch

We then swapped armies for a rematch, me playing with his dwarfs and him with my army. Rather than spread the army out, I bunkered my dwarfs around the hill, making sure that no flank was exposed and any charge could easily have a counter charge.

I did much better but ultimately still failed to win. The game basically came down to a brawl in the corner and a battle of attrition.

After several turns of charging, recharging, and a little bit of shooting and the only units left on the board were the berserkers and Knights, both with quite a few damage markers. Unfortunately the Knights were able to charge the berserkers and wiped them out. It was a very close run thing though, and a couple of dice rolls going either way could have changed the outcome completely!

BIG GAMES!

It was at this point that a couple of special people turned up. We decided to put several tables together and have a massive battle, with as many models on either side as we could muster. You may recognize them in the photo on the last page… (Hint: Ronnie & Alessio!)

In the end, the forces of good mostly held back the forces of evil (including my men), but not without taking significant casualties. Another couple of turns and it might have

swung the other way! The absolute star of our end of the table was a goblin wizard who was sniping elf units left, right and center with his Zap! spell every single turn!

By "imm0rtal reaper"

Ronnie also brought down a LOT of stuff to show off, including the new Abyssals and Forgefathers. Photo's don't do them justice guys!

He also brought down a rather big, thick book. Which had the words "Kings Of War" written on it. A big hardback book with lots of pages and lots of artwork.

It's gorgeous guys. I cannot wait for mine to arrive. The magic items are awesome, the artwork is awesome, the map is great, and everything just stunk of pure awesomeness.

Also, Mr. Ronnie brought down an extra special present for us all. It was a little printed book each, very fresh from the printers (Ronnie was getting high from the

Rematch, the Brawl in the Corner

Knights: Victors of the Brawl in the Corner

By Boris Samec

glue fumes all night). The new mini rulebook for the 3rd edition of the rules. AWESOME! Thank you Ronnie! *(Ed. Note: This story was written in June of 2012, so the new rulebook hadn't been released yet!).*

It was an absolutely fantastic night, and well worth travelling halfway down the country for! Hats off to Mr. JP who arranged it all. ▪

The Mega-Battle

No Loose Ends

By "Sukura636"

Damen Euis stood nervously in the empty room. His shaking hands struggled to keep a grip on the metal data pad, and he couldn't help but jump at the shadows as he waited for his contact to arrive.

It had all sounded so simple - turn up to the tower, hand over sensitive data to an Enforcer captain, and then return in time for a gratuitous promotion into the higher echelons of the firm. But standing in the cold room, with the darkness seeming to close in around him, it didn't sound like such a good idea after all. he'd never even seen an Enforcer. Oh, there were images transmitted across the webnet every day, but he had always kept his head down, and wasn't interested in such things. It was safer that way.

A heavy clunk of metal on metal made him jump suddenly. Before him stood an immensely tall armored figure, in gloss black armor. There was a soft hum in the air from the numerous devices hidden in the suit. A gauntlet hung above a large, holstered laser pistol, and a pair of glinting red lenses regarded him with indifference.

Damen tried to speak, but his voice seemed to have disappeared. for a moment, he gawped at the towering figure, before clearing his throat and trying again.

"The Jack of Diamonds?"

By Matt Gilbert

The Enforcer didn't answer. If there was any kind of response, the Damen didn't see it. He looked down at the pad in his hands, as if he had forgotten what is was for. Taking a deep breath, he straightened himself, and held out the pad.

"Your mission is to-"

"No details." The Enforcer's curt response cut him off. The voice was level and almost mechanical, and Damen wondered if it was a man or a machine that he was staring at.

The Enforcer methodically scrolled through the data on the pad, with no visible reaction.

When he was done, he simply crushed the pad in his hand, with a whirr of servos and a shower of sparks. Dropping the crumpled remnant, he unholstered the pistol, and leveled it with Damen's forehead. The man froze, eyes wide.

"What-"

"No loose ends," interrupted the Enforcer. There was a flare of red light before the body hit the ground. There was no head - the weapon had vaporized it.

Within minutes, the Pathfinder Enforcer had left the tower, and there was no evidence that Damen Euis had ever existed.▪

By "badgertheking"

GOREAXE MARCHES ON

A Kings of War Battle Report by Chris Cousen and Stuart Smith

The Orc Army

INTRODUCTION
by Chris Cousen

For this 'battle day' Stuart was to come down to my house. We had discussed a vague background for the battles, with my Krudger invading Stuart's Elvan lands. Goreax had already survived the two battles against his dwarves, plus a battle against T'Other One's Undead and a couple of games against another friends Abyssal Dwarves, hence it seemed to fit that we would be telling Goreaxe's story once again.

The first battle was a small 600pts encounter, limited to one Hero/Monster and one War Machine, but otherwise with army building as normal. As this was the start of the Orc invasion, Stuart chose forces that might have got to the borders quickly, mobilised to the defence of the lands.

I placed terrain based around a ruined farm (a version of the one in 'Bloodbath at Orc's Drift' for those with long memories). We then placed three objective markers on the centre line and rolled to shift them up to 6" away. Stuart then chose one objective to be the hiding place of any one magic item worth up to 25 points. (Brew of Courage as it happens). Victory went to the player who captured most objectives, or in the case of a draw, on points as in the main rulebook.

This first battle was short, giving us time for a mooch around the game shops of Huddersfield, then fish and chips followed by a second 900pt game, this time a more straight forward fight to the death.

The Looting of the Elven Lands.

Deployment; both sides lined up facing each other, though the Stormwind Cavalry were somewhat off to their left, beyond the wood. Both units of Sniffs snuck forwards towards the ruined farm, whilst the Elvan Scouts also tried to reach the farm and the Sylvan Kin forged ahead.

Turn 1

The bulk of the Orc army surged forward, the Greataxes running to try to reach the Sylvan

The Orc line advances.

Kin and chop their wooden bodies to pieces. Origble, the Orc Flagger stayed behind Orc lines, waiting to use his Healing Charm when required, and hoping to inspire the brave Orcs onwards.

To everyone's surprise the first unit of Sniffs loosed a volley of arrows at the Elvan spears, and several of the pale skins fell (2D), but the regiment held.

Turn 2

Desperate to drive the greenskins away, the Sylvan Kin charged the Greataxes, and with a flap of leathery wings, the Elf Lord on his Drakon flew straight at the Sniffs, still celebrating their shooting. The Scouts manoeuvred round the melee in front of them and loosed a volley at the Gore Riders, but the flimsy elf arrows just bounced off the Orc's armour.

The Sylvan Kin ripped into the Orcs (5D), who were on the brink of running when they saw Origble behind them and though better of fleeing. The Elf Lord presumably found the Sniffs too low to the ground, and was barely able to touch them (1D) so backed off while they laughed at him.

Turn 3

With a mighty roar the Orc forces charged their Elvan opponents, the Sniffs neatly sidestepping to make way for the Horde. Despite the steady rise and fall of axes, the entire Elf line held, although Origble was able to heal some of the damage the

The Elf Lord attacks the Sniffs

Greataxes had taken previously. (Best Nerve roll was a 4!).

The Sylvan Kin and Greataxes contest the runestone

Turn 4

The Elf Lord Caldereff, urged his Drakon over the Horde and hit Origble, the Sylvan Kin, looking fiercer than ever, charged the Greataxes whilst the Scouts contacted the Gore Riders and the Spears hit the second group of Sniffs. Over on the flank the Stormwind Cavalry turned to face the battle line, specifically the flank of the Orc Horde, a tasty target if they could charge in next time.

The Sylvan Kin obliterated their opponents (7D) and the Elven Spears were just as effective, driving their Sniff opponents from the field; Origble took a few wounds (3D) and wondered about fleeing, but he realised that would set a bad example and merely stood there, unsure of what to do next (Wavering after re-roll). The Scouts inflicted a little damage to the Gore Riders (3D), but the stout Orcs held firm.

The Sylvan Kin about to wipe out the Greataxes as fights break out

Turn 5

The remaining Orcs charged forwards, the Gore Riders into the Scouts and the Horde into the Elvan Spears, apart from the last few Sniffs who shot desperate arrows into the Sylvan Kin, and Origble who jigged around, unsure of what best to do.

The Sniffs shooting was enough to release the Sylvan Kin from whatever magic bound them, and they

The leaders duel

crumbled to bits. The Gore Riders likewise wiped out their opponents and turned to face the Drakon as the Horde drove the Spear Elves away and turned to face the oncoming Cavalry.

Turn 6

Seeing his forces driven from the field the Elf Lord urged his Drakon to charge Origble again. Following their leader's example, the Cavalry smashed into the Orc Horde. The Lord was triumphant, as Origble fled the field in terror, but the Horde was made of sterner stuff, and the few wounds the Cavalry inflicted (2D) merely angered them.

Turn 7

The Gore Riders had the Elf Lord in their sights and pounded over the turf into contact. With a roar the Horde closed the distance with the Cavalry, but they had to scramble over the farm's walls, and were unable to fight effectively. The Sniffs turned to face the Horde and the Cavalry, unsure of where best to loose their arrows as no target presented itself, so they merely shouted insults at the elves.

The Horde, hampered by the walls, were unable to even wound the Elves, much to the pinkskins delight. The Gore Riders did slightly better (2D), enough to ground the Elf Lord for now (Wavering).

Turn 8

With their Lord unable to act, perhaps pondering some deep philosophical concept, the Cavalry charged in against the Horde. Their lances spitted a few Orcs (2D), but not enough to drive back the jeering greenskins.

With the Greataxes gone things look bleak for the orcs

Turn 9

The Gore Riders took advantage of the Elf Lord's indecision, deeply wounding him (4D), but he merely stared off into space (Wavering again). The Horde pulled some of the Cavalry down (2D), but they held firm.

Turn 10

The Stormwind Cavalry were increasingly worried. Their Lord seemed unwilling or unable to act. They were the only Elves left to defend the land, so bravely charged in, perhaps even impressing the Orc Horde in front of them. Some of the Orcs fell (3D), but the main mass of Orcs held firm.

Turn 11

Charging in once more, the Gore Riders finally pulled the Elf Lord from his mount. He was trampled underfoot (hoof?) whilst the rest of the riders brought the Drakon down with their spears. Over near the wood the Orc Horde had had enough. They charged home and drove the few scattered Cavalry off the field of battle.

By Matt Gilbert

Looking along the defensive elf battle line.

Afterwards…

As the Sniffs picked their way over the battle field, looking for loot or something small to torment, one of them found Origble, still clutching his banner. The Sniff tried to prise it from his hands, but the amulet he wore flashed, and the proud Orc rose to his feet, shaking his head.

Origble knew there was a reason why the Elves tried to defend this place so fiercely. He set his troops to uprooting the nasty clean monuments, and found beneath the standing stone a copper bowl full of blue liquid. As a reward for their work in slaying the Lord and his Drakon he let the Gore Riders drink from it. When they had to fight off the inevitable Elvan counter attack, it would no doubt come in useful.

Purge the Forest
(Or the battle of the Boomstick!)

Stuart Smith writes…

So with Goreax and his Orcs rampaging through the northern forests of Galahir, Lord Calderef (who had miraculously survived being trampled by the Gore Riders quickly gathered an Elvan Host to rid his woodland home of this foul menace. Gathering in a huge clearing in the forest the elves formed a long defensive line, bristling with spear and bow that would block the Orc advance.

The rampaging Orc Hordes advance!

For this battle we chose 900 points of troops each and I opted for a defensive, very 'shooty' army.
Goreax was so un-impressed with his dice throwing in the first game he went out and bought new dice for the second game, but would they be any better?

Lord Caldereff in melee with the mighty Goreax, the dead gore riders in the background.

Lord Calderef flew his Drakon forward, roaring a challenge to the Orc Gore Riders on the right flanks. The Orcs advanced their archer 'Sniff' units which were met with a barrage of Elf bow fire, destroying both of them in the first turn. Calderef charged the gore riders and routed them in just one round of melee, avenging his earlier defeat and leaving Caldref facing the fearsome Goreaxe himself. Even the mighty Goreaxe fell to Calderef's magical elfish blade allowing Calderef to turn back toward the main battle in the centre.

Under heavy missile fire the main Orc hordes raced towards their Elvan foe, suffering many casualties during their advance.

Illadan, the Elf Army Standard bearer pointed his twin headed dragon standard (with Boomstick) at the enemy, 'BOOM!' a bolt of pure magical energy hit the enemy ranks causing further Orcish casualties as the Elves finally moved, surging forward to meet the Orcs in battle. On the left flank the Orcs routed the elf scouts but lost the battle in the centre as first the Moraxes then a horde of Ax's routed after being charged in the flank by Lord Caldereff.

At this point it has to be noted that Chris, having inflicted heavy casualties on my Elf Spear unit only needed

Elf Scouts being swamped by an Orc Horde

to throw 4 or above on the Nerve test and the Elf Spear would be gone. He threw a 3! This was a game turning moment as the Elves then charged back into the melee and routed their enemy. So much for the new dice!

The elves next lost their Seaguard to the Orc horde on the left before Caldereff flew to the rescue charging the Orcs helped by the heavily wounded unit of Elf Spear. Illadan used his Boomstick to first 'waver' and then rout the hated Orc standard bearer Origble. Caldereff finally defeated the last Orc horde and suddenly the battlefield was silent...

"BOOM STIKKA, BOOM STIKKA, BOOM BOOM BOOM!" chanted the victorious Illadan waving his dragon standard jubilantly in the air..."BOOM STIKKA, BOOM STIKKA, BOOM BOOM BOOM!" roared the victorious Elves and a new Elf war chant was born!

After celebrating their great victory the Elves burnt all the Orc bodies on a mighty pyre but the bodies of Goreaxe and Origble were not to be found..?

What lessons could I learn from the two battles that Chris and I had just enjoyed? Elves are certainly not as tough as Orcs so trying to just melee with them will usually end in noble defeat. Elves really need to soften the enemy up first with as much missile fire as you can. Chris knew what I was up to, which is why he tried to advance so quickly. His new dice worked quite well in melee but were useless on most Nerve tests, unlike my sparkly green elf dice that nearly

always threw high on my Nerve tests.

So was it tactical cunning that won the day or just lucky dice throws? Who knows, who cares, we had loads of fun!▪

Clash of Kings

By Matt Gilbert

Introduction

I've been on a journey. It's been like a roller-coaster.

Right… enough of that reality TV nonsense chatter – however, a lot of you have been following the progress, trials and tribulations of the Pathfinders as they've blogged their way to the Clash of Kings and, although no-one was actually voted off, in the end only three of us made it to the event with our armies completed. Neil, Andy and I now present our final thoughts on the whole project and our experiences from the tournament itself.

Neil Dixon
Dwarfs

"Thou shall not get distracted" became one of my commandments though 2012; I was so focussed on getting my Dwarfs complete. This paid off, as wrapped up the painting of my army by January 2013. I only had tactics and plans of how to spend the money if I won to mull over in the days leading up to the event. So, how did I fare?

Day 1

I opened with a win, but I have no memory of my first game. It could have been the early start or the venue's arctic temperatures which created a memory lapse. Either way I apologise to my opponent.

In game two I faced Undead, with numerous regiments of Zombies and Cavalry. I did not

surrounded and taken apart. In hindsight I could have deployed my Cannons separately from my infantry to force his army to split. But, the Kingdom of Men were just too numerous and probably would have overwhelmed my Dwarfs either way.

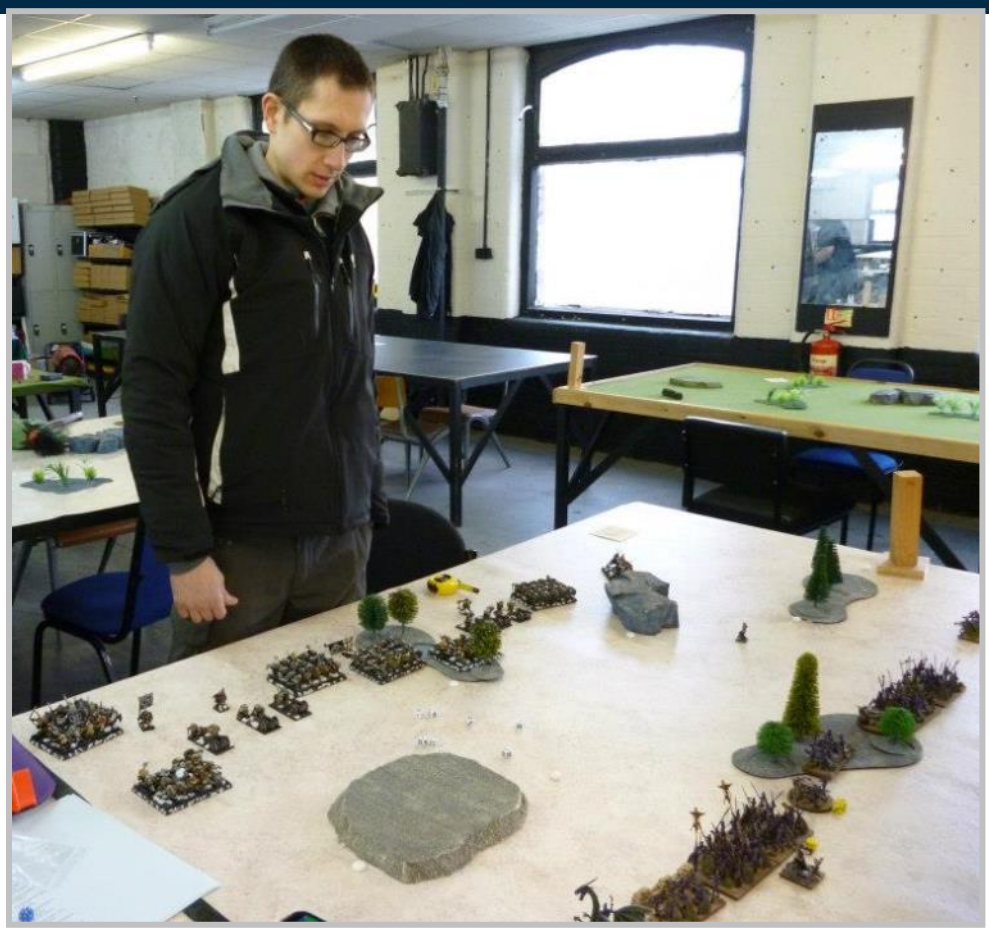
Day 2

Game four was a Dwarf on Dwarf battle in my highlight of the weekend. My opponent deployed his five Cannons and Ironwatch Troops along the back of the board. I had two choices – risk a shoot-out, which would have probably ended in a draw, or charge forward, hoping I could do enough damage to pull off a win. Choosing the latter option, I deployed my Cannons opposite his gun line, with my Rangers in support. My infantry and Brock Riders attempted to launch a pondering flank attack. Despite me taking out a chunk of his defending force of Ironclads and Ironwatch, he had more units and my attack floundered. His Ironwatch

have much hope of stopping their superior numbers holding the objectives. Luckily, my cannons saved the game. I blasted his elite Wraiths and Revenant Cavalry, and took out the Zombies in enough numbers to stand a chance. In my opponents centre his Catapults returned fire, but poor positioning of his own regiments blocked line of sight. I am still learning the tricks of how to position Dwarf infantry. My Bulwarkers targeted Skeletons in combat, but terrain and their slow movement meant my other regiments could not support. The game finished a draw, which I thought was a fair result.

I faced a Kingdom of Men horde in the third game. Cavalry, cavalry, and more cavalry thrown in for good measure! Knights, screened by Mounted Sergeants were upon me almost immediately. I moved second, and my cannons just had no time to lay waste. I deployed as a castle, but was helpless as my infantry and Cannons were systematically

gave him the edge in the shooting and were able to support up close, so I lost by quite a margin. In hindsight, I should have gone all out, and risked deploying my Rangers in the flank attack, leaving my Cannons unsupported.



After a rather spiffing, protein packed lunch of bacon, chicken and egg, game five was against Undead. He moved hordes onto the objectives in full view of my Cannons. They had no chance and by turn five he had one character left. Luckily my opponent did not feel hard done by and still thought it was a good game!

The final game against Orcs was another highlight. I was again in danger of being overwhelmed, as I faced Gore Riders, Ax hordes and numerous Trolls. Luckily, my infantry was inspired by my Banners at key points in the battle, meaning the Orcs were unable to bring their numbers to bear. My Cannons, in two groups, took out the slower moving Ax hordes, preventing them from capturing objectives and claiming vital victory points. The result was a hard fought draw.

Conclusion

Well, after my very mixed run of results, I did not win. Fifteenth was my final rank. Luckily, I had a great weekend, playing six very varied, enjoyable games, especially on day two. I got to meet Kings of War players from all over the country, and hope to have rematches in the future.

I am now developing my Dwarfs and refining my tactics. The Brock Riders were the most useful unit, as the Dwarfs really need that added speed. Bulwarkers are the strongest infantry, and I am now upgrading my Ironclad. My tweaked army will drop some Cannons, include two Brock Rider troops, a Berserker Lord on a Brock and four Bulwarker regiments. See you next year!

Matt Gilbert

Elves

I was really glad I managed to finish my painting with time to spare so I was not rushing it at the last minute. I had to force myself to do the last unit but it was worth it to see the army completed.

Here's the finished Bark-wyrm flyer unit (Drakon Riders) – my last and final unit for the army and the only thing I had left to do after Christmas:

So that was it done. I could relax having decided I didn't have the time (or inclination!) to complete my objective markers for the Clash of Kings. Then, all packed and ready to go on the Thursday night before the big weekend, I had nothing left to do.

Friday morning I got my magnetised* Drakon Lord out to show the wife and wondered if it would stick to a baking tray. It did but then fell off. I caught both it and the tray but the back leg bent and came away from the base and the paint round the ankle chipped off. Aaaarrrgh!

So out came the paints and a hasty repair job was done on the leg and ankle. With the paints out and 90 minutes before my mate Jon cam round to pick me up and head up North, the objective counters on the shelf started whispering to me. Unable to resist, I succumbed to their call and was just spray-varnishing them when Jon arrived.

So they did get done in the end and made it up to the event, and there's a picture of them on the next page.

Sadly, I'd played a test game on the previous Wednesday evening and my Spirit Weaver (Mage-Queen) had gone between some trees in that game. I didn't see her when I packed everything up so she missed out on the trip and I had to borrow a Nurgle sorcerer for the weekend as a proxy!

The event itself was great fun. Five of us travelled up from the south coast to play and we all had a great weekend. Everyone was friendly and all the games were played in a very light-hearted way. I think some people were fearing that the big prize on offer would mean rock-hard tournament armies and aggressive, uncompromising play but that simply was not the case.

My army did about as well as I expected, having been selected for fluff rather than to win and, if I remember

** Magnetic strips on the bottom of the bases to hold to the steel paper I'd put in a case for transport to the event.*

It was good fun though and a very different sort of challenge for me. I think I'll probably revisit the army at some point and add some more units to it, probably some more elven units and maybe the treeman I was envisaging at the start of the project all those months ago.

correctly, managed 1 win, 3 draws and 2 loses.

I've never really built an army in this way before – picking a list first and then buying and painting specifically and only for that one, fixed list. I know it's something other people do but I'm more the "buy everything so I can pick what I want for any game" collector. I rarely use the same list twice.

Happily, even lacking the presence of the Mage Queen, the army won the Best Painted award (there was some stiff competition). It will feature in the KoW book the next time it is released (which means I might just add some more units after all... and it certainly means I have to keep it safe!).

Andy Robertson

That's it: it's done and I lost - but not as badly as I predicted. That's not to say I came complete bottom, I actually did manage to

win a couple of games. But lack of experience on the tournament scene really had me concerned early in to the project, particularly with the fact of such a high cash prize up for grabs I really thought unsociable power gamers would be pouring out of the woodwork at the Clash of Kings tournament. But I couldn't be more wrong. Everyone got on tremendously well; I can't recall any negative outbursts or unsociability of any type.

In fact I even found myself at times cheering because I didn't just lose some of my games, but I was completely tabled without killing a thing. And all my opponents could say after each dice roll was "I am so sorry, I really am, I'm not doing this on purpose". And it was great. I can't believe how wrong I was in my expectations of the weekend. And it was a real credit to the community within the forums, Facebook groups and general gaming clubs connected to Mantic Games.

The only part that I feel I let myself down was one particular item that was meant to be the showcase piece of the army, the damn pirate ship. I shared my plans in the past of having two woolly mammoths that would stand in as a fight wagon regiment dragging an old dilapidated pirate ship on wheels. The pirate ship was obviously going to have no real use in a game, I actually planned to have it removable and only really there to be a show piece item. But sadly I never finished it. I got so caught up with other elements of the army such as my chariots and then got caught up in the holiday season and before I knew it, it was mere weeks to the tournament. I debated attempting to complete something near my original plans though I felt I wouldn't have been able to do it justice and I would potentially be dragging an eyesore to the tournament.

Now that's not to say I've abandoned the idea. Orklina's (the army's female Orc general) mighty pirate ship might one day see the light of day, but saying that, there's a LOT of new miniatures awaiting release for this year (and need I say DEADZONE?) to

potentially distract me further. So you'll have to wait and see.

Well to summarise the whole weekend, it consisted of great food, fantastic games and even better company. And it's something of which if you've not yet had an opportunity to attend a Mantic event or tournament then I strongly recommend you seek the opportunity to. Because it would be something you would not regret. I'm left eagerly waiting for next year's tournament and looking forward to meeting a lot of you again soon.▪

By Stuart Smith

How to Paint Faces

By "Zirrian"

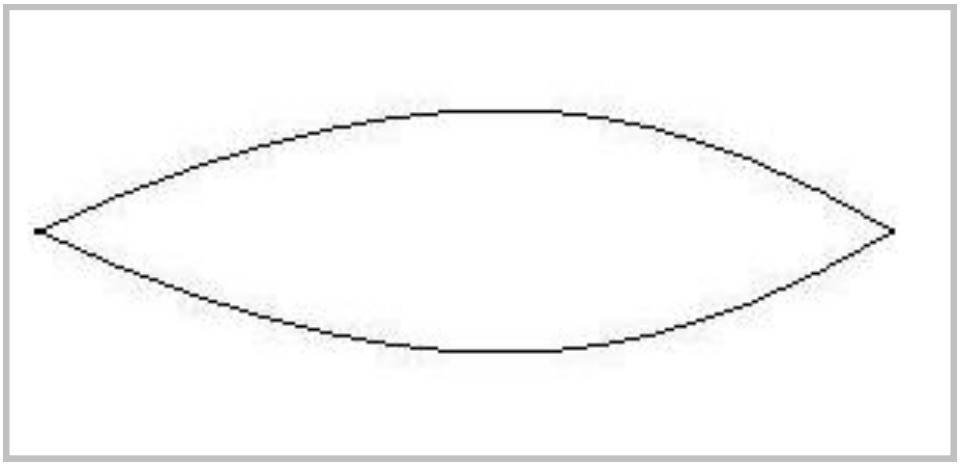
The basecoated miniature

Heya fellow painters and gamers, I'm Zirrian from the Mantic (and many other) forums, and I've decided to write a little article about painting. Let me tell you that I'm no professional, just an individual who likes to paint, and sometimes does neat paintjobs. I don't want to bore you with my not-so-long hobby history, but if you have any questions after this article, please feel free to ask. There will be more articles, and I try to fulfill requests as we progress. This first article will be on painting faces with (about) 6 easy steps. But first, let's see what you need for painting a mini!

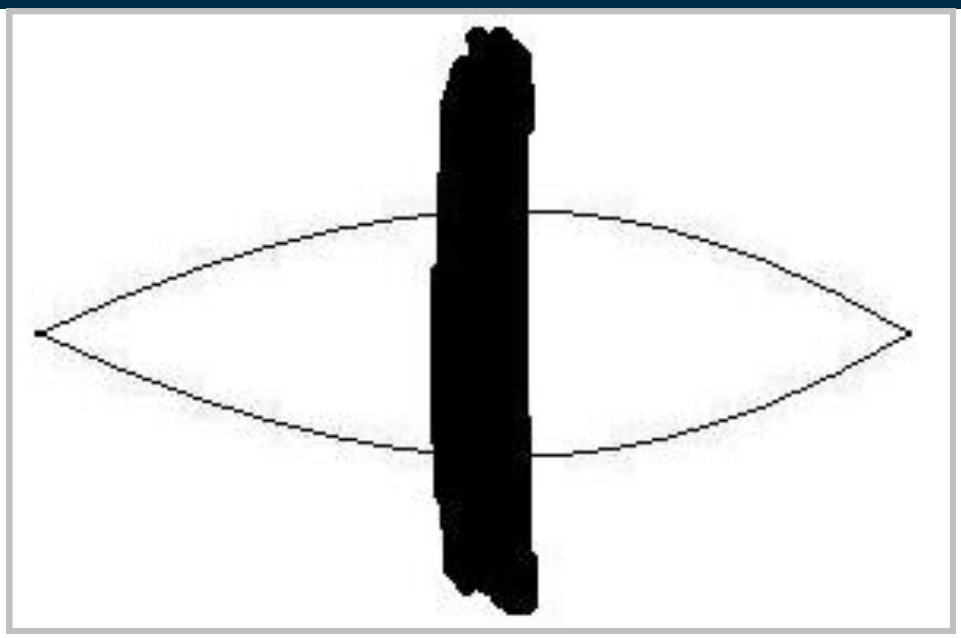
Let's assume that you have all the equipment to assembly a mini, and jump straight to the painting part. So, necessary stuff:

- assembled mini
- spray paint for basecoating (or you can do it with a paintbrush too, but believe me – it's much easier with sprays or an airbrush)
- white, medium-brown tanned skin paints
- a sharp brush, preferably 2/0, but anything is good for the job as long as it's sharp
- steady hands and sharp eyes

If you have everything, let's do this!



The eye outline



The line for the pupil

First, apply basecoat. Then paint two large white spots where the eyes should be. It's not a problem if you go out of the line, we'll correct it later. Next, paint a line in the middle of the mini's eyes as pupils.

I made the pics with Paint because it was easier to show them like this instead of showing on the mini – that would be really small, believe me.

Next step, get your brown paint and put a layer on the face, but be patient not to ruin the eyes with an unlucky stroke of the brush.

Then, grab your Tanned Flesh paint, and paint all areas but the recess parts. Be cautious with this part too.

The initial painting around the eyes

And the final, mix Tanned Flesh with White, and paint only the highest areas of the face. This is your final step, and you can basically say your mini's face is done.

Of course you can apply this method to any flesh areas on miniatures. As you can see, the steps are not hard, you only need to practice a lot. Oh, and thin your paints. If you need any other skin colours, use the same methods but with different colours (such as: if you need blue skin for some reason, use dark blue as a base tone, and light up to get a blue skin tone).

Feel free to ask anything about the article, I'll gladly answer you :) Next time I'll show you how to paint other areas of the minis – it's not hard, basically you gotta do the same thing but without the eyes.

Yours,

Zirrian (zirrian@gmail.com)▪

Painting the rest of the face

Final touches for painting the face

Raising an Army
A Guide for the Beginning Necromancer

A New Player's Guide to the Undead in Kings of War.

By Matt aka "Dustcrusher"

With assistance from Mantic Forum members Darklord, Fred, and Mr. EB (thanks for the help, guys!)

So you're new to Kings of War, or perhaps you're an existing player looking for a second army. There's an army for most every playstyle, and even within a faction there are plenty of options for running a viable list. This article's intent is to provide a summary of how the Undead play and a unit breakdown to allow you to make informed decisions before purchasing an army.

Before I continue, a couple of things for new players to keep in mind:

1. Unlike some other fantasy/ancient/medieval mass combat games, there's no real "power listing" in Kings of War. Your list won't win games- you will.
2. This is based on my experience and observations, with input from other experienced players. While I hope you find it helpful, it should by no means be considered absolute. Take *all* advice on how to play, including this article, with a grain of salt.

With that said, here's a synopsis on the Undead:

The Undead have a mix of mostly slower units that are *Shambling* and cannot move At the Double, along with some fast but

By "imm0rtal reaper"

By Chris Schlumpberger

fragile units. In exchange, they have access to movement tricks via their Heroes with the *Dark Surge* ability, limited healing when the unit inflicts damage in melee (via *Evil Dead)*, and high Nerve values, including no Wavering value for many units.

Basic Infantry:

Some or all of these are likely to form the core of your army. Without infantry, all of your snazzy specialized troops, cavalry, and war engines will be overrun by your opponent.

Skeletons:

Skeletons are fairly inexpensive, basic infantry. They can pay extra for spears to gain *Phalanx* and buy an *Undead Giant Rat (Dog?)* to increase the effects of *Evil Dead*, healing 1 point of damage per point inflicted instead of a single point regardless. The low cost does have a price- they are weak in Melee with a 5+.

I feel there are two ways to run them best- one is in Regiments with no add-ons, and the other is a tricked out Horde with Spears and possibly a Rat/dog. I would not recommend using Troops unless the game is under 1000 points.

Zombies:

Ah, the humble zombie. While they don't have the options Skeletons do, a Horde of 30 Zombies gets 30 attacks (most Hordes get 20), and an Endless Swarm of 60 Zombies gets 40 attacks. At every troop size except Swarm (40), Zombies have a higher Nerve than their fleshless counterparts.

There are drawbacks- Zombies' defense is a weak 3+ so they are easy to hurt, and all those attacks are evened out by a Melee score of 5+. That said, Zombies don't care much about *Crushing Strength* or *Piercing* since they are already easy to wound. Units of 20 and 30 will blunt the enemy's advance, and the 40 and 60 Zombie units are roadblocks that will take either multiple

By Michael DeFranco

turns or dedicated effort to rout.

Ghouls:
Ghouls are an anomaly- instead of being slow, higher Nerve value, and *Shambling,* they are quick (base speed 6), can move At the Double, with lower Nerve value. They have a Melee of 4+, which is more difficult for your opponent to ignore, but their Nerve values are among the lowest in a mostly high -Nerve faction.

Ghouls can also be Wavered, and their low Defense of 3+ means they aren't durable, though as with Zombies, it renders *Piercing* and *Crushing Strength* less useful.

There are two ways I've seen Ghouls used- one is as a bait unit to tempt an enemy into overextending, and the other is as harrier/ skirmisher type troops that can get into an enemy fast- they can be good at finishing off weakened units.

Revenants:
Do the above three options seem too much like fodder to you? You want heavy infantry? Revenants are what you seek.

Revenants have a durable 5+ Defense, and a good 4+ Melee score. If you want them to hit harder they can trade shields for great weapons and smash foes with *Crushing Strength (1),* lowering Defense to 4+ in exchange*. Of course, these improvements come at an increased cost, but if you want heavy infantry, this is your unit.

*Unfortunately, Mantic has not produced models with this option at the time of this writing. There are alternatives available from other companies- or you could show off your modeling skills and convert them!

Specialist Infantry:

These units excel at a particular role, and are among the most interesting and thematic models in the faction.

Skeleton Archers:
It's the only other ranged unit you have besides the Catapult (which we'll get to later). Archers cost the same as normal

Skeletons. In exchange for being able to shoot at 5+, their Melee goes up to a pathetic 6+ and their Defense drops to 3+. Sadly, this makes them even weaker than Goblin Spitters, who can at least fight as well as they shoot.

Take either troops or perhaps a Horde with a Jar of the Four Winds to increase their range. A Regiment is not worth it- use those 15 points on a magic item instead. Skip the standard upgrade options (standard, musician, Rat/dog)- you want this unit to stay out of melee as long as possible- once charged, it crumbles quickly.

Wraiths:

Wraiths at first glance seem like super troops - they can *Fly* (don't forget this also means they are *Nimble*), have a 6+ Defense, *Crushing Strength (1)*, and a fleet base Movement of 10. They can be taken in units of 5, 10, and 20, so why not have an entire army of them?

First off, they are pricey. For the cost of a troop of 5 you can get 20 Revenants, or for 10 more points a Swarm of 40 Zombies. Second, they have a Nerve almost as low as Ghouls, so if any attacks get through they are likely to rout. Third, it is easy to overextend them with their superior movement rate, and lastly, most other units with *Fly* can also move At the Double (though this isn't all bad - see below).

Wraiths are a hunting unit. They excel at flanking and routing weakened units or destroying War Engines. Thanks to their high Move and *Fly*, they are one of the best units for sneaky tricks with *Dark Surge*- they can easily flank or hit a unit from behind this way.

By Boris Samec

Werewolves:
Werewolves are another devastating unit at first glance. They can't *Fly* like Wraiths but they are still *Nimble*. They have an excellent move of 9, and unlike Wraiths they are not *Shambling* so they can move 18" At the Double and pivot once. They also have the best base Melee (3+) and Defense (6+) scores in the game, so they will be perceived (rightly so!) as a threat.

By Mantic Games, Used with Permission

Downsides are like most Large Infantry- a relatively low number of attacks for cost, and like Ghouls they can be Wavered. Their nerve is average among living troops, so it looks sub-par compared to their *Shambling* counterparts. As with Wraiths, Werewolves are expensive.

Werewolves are the other hunting unit option. They can get in your opponent's face quickly, and even a single Wolf hitting a flank gets 6 attacks at 3+. Single Werewolves can fit through narrower gaps between units and will destroy War Engines if they don't get shot trying to reach them. Unlike Wraiths, they don't need *Dark Surge*, so they can operate independently.

Mummies:
If Revenants are heavy infantry, Mummies are shock troops. 6+ Defense, *Crushing Strength (2)*, and *Regeneration* means they will be tough to eliminate and will hurt just about anything they hit…if they get there. Unfortunately, Mummies are speed 4, making them even slower than most of the rest of the army, and their cost is along the lines of Wraiths.

If you know you are playing a scenario and not just rolling for one of the default game types, Mummies can be stubborn objective defenders- just watch out for Fire Oil, *Breath Attacks*, and *Zap!* spells. If you want to try a two-lined approach to your deployment, they could be used as a counter to overeager *Flying* units that want to get behind your main line.

Wights:
What if Mummies just aren't strong enough for you? You want something that can hack down the castle gate, *then* slay the cowards hiding behind it. Wights can do both.

Wights have a uniquely small unit size (3 figures) and as such they can fit into small gaps easily. *Vicious* gives them a reroll on a failed Wound roll, and they have- get this- *Crushing Strength (4)*! Who knew three normal sized undead could be so strong?

Their Melee value is average (4+) and they get 9 attacks, which is in line with a unit of 3 Werewolves. The Wights are also *Shambling* so they can be *Dark Surged*. -/15 Nerve is pretty sturdy for a unit this size. They are slow-moving, flightless Wraiths that hit like a War Engine.

A Defense of 5+ is good, but your opponent will look to take them out as soon as possible, so use a fodder unit to shield them until they are in position.

Cavalry:

Units on horses (or other mounts). They are highly mobile offensive troops- they will crush weaker units under their mounts' feet, but don't expect them to hold the line for an extended period.

Revenant Cavalry:
These guys are excellent. I've been trying to be fair about each unit's strengths and weaknesses, but I'm having a hard time here. I'll present this like a recipe:

Take 10 Revenants. Subtract 2 Attacks. Add *Crushing Strength (2)* but keep their Defense at 5+. Melee stays the same at 4+. Increase their base Speed to 8 and leave *Shambling* for movement fun. Increase their total base size from 100x40mm to 125x50mm.

Now, you'd think all this would cost more than a base unit of 10 Revenants on foot, right? It doesn't! Both are 85 points. You're trading in two Attacks for increased speed and wounding ability- absolutely worth it.

They aren't perfect, though- Most other factions' mounted troops have a 3+ Melee score. Dwarf Brock Riders don't but they get more attacks and a higher Nerve. Goblin Fleabag Riders are weaker, but they get Nimble and they are cheaper. *Shambling* allows for movement tricks but the other races can move At the Double.

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By Boris Samec

Cavalry Regiments are solid- 70 more points adds 8 more attacks and 3 more Nerve, but it's tough to not take 2 Revenant Cavalry Troops instead, unless you're experimenting with cavalry-centric army.

Soul Reavers:
These guys are among the best cavalry in the game, but it comes with a very high price tag - 1 Troop of 5 Soul Reavers costs **100 points** more than a Revenant Cavalry Troop.

Now, with that said, that 100 points buys you things the Revenant horsemen are lacking- Melee 3+, Defense 6+, 13 Attacks, and 12/14 Nerve. Only Dwarf Brock Riders have better Nerve and Attack numbers, and their Melee and Defense are both 4+. Soul Reavers' Defense is the best of any cavalry in the game. These guys will hit what they charge very, very hard- and woe be to anyone flanked or hit from behind by these guys.

In addition to the cost, Soul Reavers trade a lack of *Shambling* for being subject to Wavering. These guys are the closest thing to a "Death Star" unit that the Undead have- maneuver them well and they will probably be your MVPs- leave them vulnerable and they will be an expensive casualty.

War Engines:

You have one choice- the Balefire Catapult. 65 points for *Blast (2d6), Indirect Fire, Piercing (3),* and *Shambling* is a pretty good buy, if you take more than one. Any hit will almost certainly take wounds, and any target you can see between 12 and 48" can be shot.

Outside of siege games (where you'll likely want at least two), the Balefire is an interesting option, but not mandatory. Use them to soften up high defense targets or rout screening troops.

Heroes and Personalities:

These are the Heroes (well, villains mostly) that will lead your forces to victory over the living. These personalities are where your *Dark Surge* is going to come from; in addition, they give you access to other abilities like *Zap!* and *Inspiring*, and a few are powerful combatants in their own right.

Mhorgoth the Faceless:
This is the Undead faction's named Hero. He's a walking, er, *Flying* toolkit of abilities. His only mediocre stat is a 4+ Melee, but you shouldn't be using it anyway.

Problem is, he is ridiculously expensive. Get the model- it's a great sculpt, and use it as a

normal Necromancer or a Liche King depending on what you prefer. I'd only field him as Mhorgoth in special scenarios or games over 2500 points.

Vampire on Undead Pegasus:
A flying Cavalry monster and low level Necromancer all in one. He's pretty tough and trades a lot of magical ability for melee might. Also has *Inspiring* built-in and can block units because he's not an *Individual.* He can be a pretty cool centerpiece, but I'd probably reserve him for games of at least 1600 points.

Undead Army Standard Bearer:
Every army has standards, and most of the time they are worth taking (except Goblins- the Wiz is a far better deal). They're a cheap source of *Inspiring,* giving you an extra reroll against bad Nerve checks. If you worry about having the Standard in the right place you can add a mount for additional flexibility, and giving them magic items (the *Healing Charm* is a fun one) can make them more versatile. Keep them out of combat, though- they are fragile.

Cursed Pharaoh:
Like his Mummy brethren, this guy is tough- his nerve is even higher than Mhorgoth's. Melee 4+ and 5 Attacks is decent with *Crushing Strength (2).* He's *Inspiring* and can *Dark Surge* Mummies, and has Regeneration as well. I'd avoid using him in normal lists- if you're using 2 or more units of Mummies, take him- he's tough enough to wade in alongside them. Otherwise, you're better off with someone else.

Vampire Lord:
This guy is powerful, but he has a key drawback. First, the good- He's fast (Speed 7), powerful in Melee with a 3+, 6+ Defense, *Crushing Strength (2)*, *Inspiring*, plus he has all of the abilities of a Necromancer except for a weaker *Dark Surge*.

For the price, his Nerve's a tad on the low side. Then there's the big problem- his cost. The Lord is a mere 10 points less than the Vampire on Undead Pegasus. Those 10 points gets you *Fly*, 3 more inches of movement, and the loss of *Individual*. The mount option for the Vampire Lord is even more pointless- it costs 10 points more than

By "left64"

the Pegasus-mounted version and increases your move by 1 measly inch.

So why take this Hero over the Pegasus-mounted version? The Vampire Lord has a smaller base size, the increased mobility of *Individual,* 6+ Defense, and a larger pool of magic items to use. The Lord's not a bad choice per se, but for the cost, I think the Pegasus, or two Revenant Kings and points to spare, are better choices.

By Matt Gilbert

Necromancer:
Necromancers are one of the mainstay Individuals in the Undead faction. They are the cheapest source of *Dark Surge*, *Heal*, and *Zap!*. His *Dark Surge (8)* is only 2 dice behind the Liche King and 4 dice behind Mhorgoth. He's not Inspiring (though you can mitigate this for one by taking the Talisman of Inspiration), and if he gets caught in melee, he's dead.

The Necromancer should be using one of his spell abilities each turn. A mount will give you more flexibility in getting him where he needs to be.

Liche King:
This guy is for when the normal Necromancer is not enough. 3 more points of Nerve, 2 more dice of *Dark Surge, Heal, and Zap!* for 70 points. He's still much cheaper than Mhorgoth. A mount might be a good idea for him- what's another 20 points when you're spending 180 on him already? He's the Necromancer, High-Octane edition. If you're thinking about taking Mhorgoth, save your points and take a Liche King and two Necromancers instead- you'll get a lot more out of them.

Revenant King:
The other mainstay Individual and counterpart to the Necromancer. The Revenant King loses *Heal, Zap!,* and 2 dice of *Dark Surge* compared to his mage counterpart. In exchange you get increased durability, good melee ability, and *Inspiring.*
A mount can be a good idea for this guy, too.
I think Necromancer versus Revenant King (a subject which has been discussed many times among Undead Players) is best saved for a future article. I would recommend trying a mix of the two- both have their uses and it will likely come down to how you want to play your army.

The Next Step- Recruiting Your Minions

The One Player Battle Set and the Two-Player Battle Set are good starting points- you will definitely want at least one or two units of infantry no matter what else you're fielding, and both give you a sample of three of the four basic infantry types.

From there, it's up to you. There are many ways to run any Kings of War army, and Undead have the potential for some of the most unusual (and fun) lists in the game.

Remember, to the Necromancer, today's enemy may become tomorrow's ally with a little dark magic…▪

By Boris Samec

By "SneakyChris"

BREACH

By Michael Grey

Containment Protocol - Incident Ref#: 0000037..Time Stamp - minus 00:56

There was Dreadball on the entertainment screen. There was always Dreadball on the entertainment screen. Cole wasn't a fan, and knew he was in the minority because of that, but it was hard to appreciate the sport when you saw the net result of skirmishes between rival fans in the emergency room. He counted himself lucky Gaian 16 was too new a colony to have its own team. When that momentous day came he could kiss every Saturday night goodbye for the rest of his working life.

The screen had attracted a usual crowd of roughnecks, gathered at the carriage's end while the monorail threaded its way through Gaian Prime's precincts. They cheered at some especially brutal impact, and then animatedly rated it against the one from last night or the night before.

Cole yawned and looked through the window. Gaian Prime slid by, made clean and almost palatable by velocity. It was only when the 'rail halted at a station did the ever presence litter and algae staining show itself before they moved off, blurring to the uniform grey of plasticrete Sphere-wide.

Just another day in the outer colonies.

He closed his eyes and leant into the seat. Was this really what he'd wanted? Being part of the push outwards from the core worlds had seemed so enticing at the recruitment office. So romantic. Graphs of rolling plains, infinite horizons. The taming of frontiers. Becoming self-sufficient, away from the meagre hand outs of the corporations.

And instead; this. Pretty much held hostage in a Bubbled city until his passage was paid off and he could go…. Where? Another establishment colony like Gaian? As far as he knew, this was as good as it got out here.

He opened his eyes when the game cut off mid-play, replaced by the preened face of a

man with a forced grin to the jeers of the fans below.

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When the face spoke it was with the stilted delivery of a facet recording, separate sound files spliced to play a coherent message. "Good morning, fellow Gaians! This is Kamal McMahon, the governor of Gaian 16 and your public servant, wishing you a pleasant morning. The temperature is currently 33 degrees in our fine city, climbing to a high of 44 with a humidity of 80 percent, so be sure to keep cool and drink plenty of water. Enjoy your day, and remember; each one of you is as indispensable to the colony as I am." An insincere wink and he was gone. One of the teams had done something in the meantime to cause the men below to swear. One spat on the floor. Cole yawned again.

***

Gaian Prime General Hospital heaved. One of the first municipal buildings constructed on the fledgling colony, and built to serve the bare minimum the corp protocols demanded for the resident numbers at the time. It was pretended the inevitable population boom would ever come, credits changed hands, the right boxes were ticked and due diligence was seen to have been observed.

Fast forward thirty years and the original hospital still stood, as recognisable in design as the day the doors opened, if not in the queues of sick and injured leading out from every door, laying and sleeping on moss-covered pavements in an intangible race between their turn and possible death.

Cole rushed from the change room to surgery, pulling on sterile whites and securing a facemask. He had been early for his shift, but time and industrial accidents wait for no one and the previous shift's nurses were still in other theatres.

Enjoy your day, and remember; each one of you is as indispensable to the colony as I am

He reached the ER door as another nurse arrived, pulling a wheeled and battered halogen light. "Morning Cole. Just in time." She nodded at the door. He opened it with a flamboyant wave.

"What do we have Jean?" He followed her through into a surgery mid-prep. Empty

boxes of medicines, syringes and the like leaned stacked against the walls. Other boxes and discarded wipes lay around them, kicked to one side by busy medicos to clear the floor around the central table and left for a clean up the room was always too busy to receive. Cole caught a glimpse of green fingering its way out from behind one of the stacks. Even here the omnipresent algae found root.

"Male, 23, slipped with a circular saw and caught it in the upper intestinal tract"

"Male, 23, slipped with a circular saw and caught it in the upper intestinal tract." As she wheel the light into position the surgical covering on the bed shifted and emitted a pained cry which descended into a groan. "Anaesthesia's still setting in," she finished.

At the table a doctor leant over the patient, hands busy and out of sight. He looked up at the light as the nurse aimed it down. "And what's this?"

"Industrial light from the construction next door," she said. "The builder's haven't arrived yet and I don't think they need it as much as him." A nod to the table.

"No hospital ones…?" the doctor let the question trail hopelessly. "At least tell me it's clean."

"Sprayed it twice with disinfectant, Doctor."

He accepted that with a nod and noticed Cole. "Ah, good, an extra pair of hands, we can begin. If you wouldn't mind nurse." The doctor looked back down and administered an injection. Cole ripped off a salute only Jean saw. Her eyes crinkled and she waved him to stop.

She connected the light as he pulled a tray of implements to the table, and then pulled over the G-Net screen. It hung suspended from the ceiling, allowing Cole to angle it over the now-unconscious patient's head. The screen blinked, clicked, prompted Cole for a password which he gave, and then connected to the greater-network. The screen showed a doctor in theatre whites.

"Please state the nature of the procedure," it said in an accentless voice.

By "Daedle"

Without looking up the doctor said, “Male, mid-twenties, basic none augmented, no known allergies. Patient has multiple clean lacerations through the upper intestine between the transverse and ascending colon caused by an industrial saw.”

“Is the patient stable?” the screen doctor asked.

The doctor looked at Cole who checked the vital readout. “He is.”

The G-Net screen flicked as files were access, then segued to the image of the screen doctor bent over the representation of a patient with similar injuries. “Begin by removing obstructions and cleaning the wounds.”

“All done,” said the doctor.

The screen flicked again, fast forwarded to a later phase. “The intestinal lacerations can now be cauterised. Begin by-”

Cole looked up. So did the doctor and Jean. The screen showed black with bold white letters saying 55760 ERROR – CONNECTION UNAVAILABLE. The full stop blinked off and on while they watched.

“Aesthetic will wear off in just over 90 minutes, doctor”

Cole reached out, used his index knuckle to turn the screen off and back on.

Nothing.

The doctor looked between the patient and the screen again. “Try again nurse.” Cole did to the same effect. He saw a sheen across the doctor’s forehead. The G-Net had ever gone down before, and without it they would have to rely on themselves and what little training they had.

The doctor blinked.

“Aesthetic will wear off in just over 90 minutes, doctor,” said Jean. She sounded calmer than Cole felt.

“Very well.” The doctor coughed and shook his head. “Nothing we haven’t done before, I’m sure we’ll be fine. Charge up the cauteriser, we’ll begin there.”

***

Fifteen hours later in a bar off Landing Square, Cole downed his second beer to try and calm his shaking hands.

By Matt Gilbert

By Mantic Games, Used with Permission

"I still don't see what your problem is." Jean sat opposite him, still on her first drink.

"I think you would had you been onplanet as long as me. I've had to remind that doctor to wash his hands before an op once." He forced swallowed the beer. Light and fizzy; cheap to make and easy on the hangover. Just as the colonies liked it.

If Doctor Hygiene back there was anyway competent he wouldn't be on this armpit of a world

"I think you're exaggerating."

He wasn't. "How much training did you have? When you were in the recruitment office on whatever world you came from. When you looked down the list of required jobs, had you had any medical training?"

She shook her head. "You know I didn't."

"And neither did I. Nurse, sounded fun and a few pay grades above shit shoveller. A completed aptitude test and basic training on route and bam, in at the deep end. Do you know how much extra training a doctor needs here?"

She didn't answer, just sipped her drink and let him get it off his chest.

"They have to complete basic medical school. *Complete*. Not *pass*. If Doctor Hygiene back there was anyway competent he wouldn't be on this armpit of a world."

"He can't be that bad. He patched that boy up without the G-Net telling him how."

"Lucky for the poor son of a bitch it was something we'd done before with no complications. I dread to think what happens if the G-Net's not back up tomorrow."

Jean looked uncomfortable and he felt she was resisting the urge to look at her watch. That was when he realised how drunk and bitter he sounded.

"I'm sorry," he said. "Just letting off steam. It'll be better tomorrow."

***

The monorail home was as packed as that morning, only this time the sports fans beneath the vid screen were actually drunk instead of just acting like it.

Cole tried to tune them out, closing his eyes to the Bubble's ever present orange glow. He gave up when a crushed beer can clattered down the carriage.

He opened his eyes and his attention was drawn to the noise coming from the crowd. It was different from this morning. He paid more attention and realised it wasn't the score line they were swearing at.

By Mark Relf

"Same bloody game as Monday, mate. Saw it myself."

They're repeating a game? Cole did not know much of Dreadball, but what little he did included that there were enough teams to show several live games each night. A repeat was something he had never heard of.

On the screen armoured athletes threw themselves violently into each other as a ball sped by at sub-sonic speeds. It could have been any game. He didn't even know the team colours.

He closed his eyes again and tried to ignore the noise.

Cole did not know much of Dreadball, but what little he did included that there were enough teams to show several live games each night. A repeat was something he had never heard of.

***

His apartment building was silent. This time of night most of the occupants would be asleep or at night shifts outside of the Bubble, farming the ultra-growth vegetation before it could grow back.

He reached his apartment, key card ready, when he saw the tape on the door frame. Just a short strip of clear cello tape, half hanging as if someone had unstuck it from their fingers as they passed. Easy to miss and easy to explain.

The door opened wider showing nothing but darkness beyond, no sign of the person holding the door

Or, in this case, with a different meaning. He sighed. He really just wanted his bed before the shift tomorrow. Instead he walked to the next door and rapped lightly. No answer. He tried again and leant in. "Cas?"

His own door opened a crack. "Here," said a voice.

He looked between the two doors. "What are you-?" he began.

"Shh! Get in here."

The door opened wider showing nothing but darkness beyond, no sign of the person holding the door. He walked in. "Don't mind if I do, it being my apartment."

A hand shot out, grabbed his shirt and pulled him all the way in. The door closed fast, just short of slamming. He stumbled in, looked at the back of the figure peering through the security hole. She held a hand out toward him, waving down in a 'keep quiet' motion. He did, forcing back another sigh.

After a second of nothing happening the figure turned around. "Coast clear, you can turn the

By "Skolo"

lights on."

"Why thank you very much." He was used to his neighbour's paranoia-driven decisions. Breaking into his apartment was a new one, but he'd known her long enough to not be surprised. Her position with the military gave Cas access to training which allowed her to indulge in her conspiracy theories, 'And lets me keep an eye on the bastards' she would remind him.

But when he flicked the switch he got a surprise. A heavy looking pistol was holstered at her hip. He had grown used to the absence of weapons. Firearms were illegal inside the city, and to see one made him uneasy.

"You, er, you supposed to be wearing that off duty?"

"No." She pushed passed him to the lounge windows and pulled back the blinds to look outside. "It's not the Marine's, I have to check those in. This is mine."

"Well that's a comfort. Tea? Boil the water twice."

"Boil the water twice." She said it at the same time and gave what was planned to be an angry look but which quickly turned into a grin.

He made himself busy in the kitchenette. "To what do I owe the pleasure? Not that I don't mind visitors but I usually like them to arrive after me."

Firearms were illegal inside the city, and to see one made him uneasy

"It's happening," she said from the window. "It's always been happening, at least if I were to believe you the other times too."

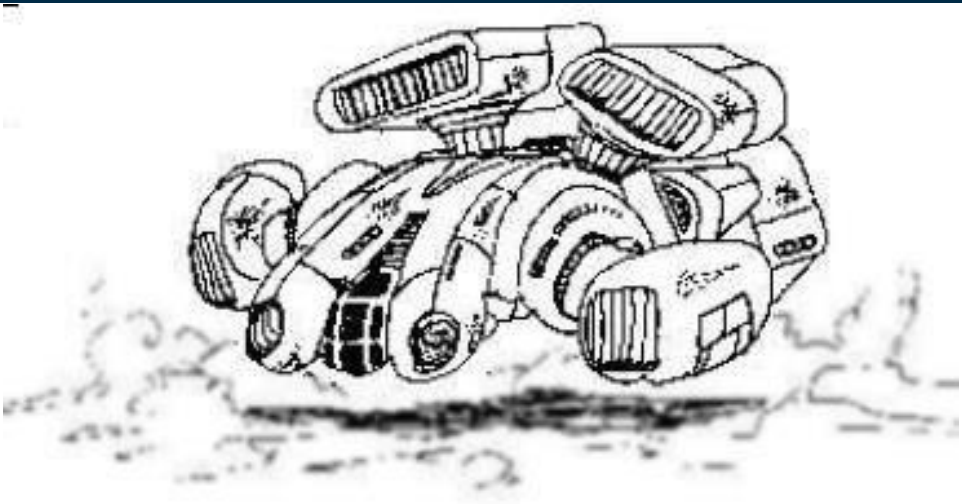
By Mantic Games, Used with Permission

"This time I'm right."

He looked at her while she peered outside. The gun was still secured in its holster, but just having it there she risked her job or even being shipped to a penal colony.

"And what's so different about this time?"

She left the window, came to the kitchen bench and slid her tablet along the top to Cole. He picked it up. "And?"



By Jonathan Hicks

"Check the mails," she said. He did. Her inbox was a barren affair, a few reply prompts from obviously fake G-Net handles, some spam. Nothing personal. But at least regular mails, a few every hour. But nothing from the past day.

We have 275, a relay station the size of a small moon powered by a dedicated fusion reactor, and a backup to that on a further orbit. A planet does not just drop off the G-Net

He pulled out his own and checked. The past day was empty also, the last refresh showing as 7:36am, about the same time the G-Net went off in surgery.

He tried connecting. Nothing. It showed connection to the local network, but nothing more, nothing from the Sphere.

He looked at Cas. "It's not just that," she said and picked up the TV remote. She flicked on the major news channel. What should have been rolling reports from across the Sphere showed some local news story from a satellite township. Instead of trade wars, some plans for an enclosed highway. She flicked to the next channel to show something similar. "It's the same with each. Reruns of everything already shown. The only live stuff is from onplanet. Even the-"

"-Dreadball," he finished staring at his tablet. She smiled as if she had just won something. "You're learning."

He didn't like feeling as if he was being played with, but that annoyed him perhaps more than it should. He put it down to stress and an increasing need for sleep, and refused to entertain the thought he might be worried. "It doesn't have to mean anything. So we lost connection to the greater network, so what?" He ran his hand through his hair and poured them tea.

But even if it didn't mean something the notion was, if not worrying then... disquieting. Not unlike waking up to find your apartment door locked from the outside and phone disconnected.

"Do you know just how many satellites orbit this planet?"

He shook his head and sipped his tea. "Three? Five? How many do you need for a

small operation like this?"

"An operation of 300 million people requires not less than 250 active sats at any one time. Council protocol. We have 275, a relay station the size of a small moon powered by a dedicated fusion reactor, and a backup to that on a further orbit. A planet does not just drop off the G-Net, Cole."

By Mantic Games, Used with Permission

She sounded so sure. And something else. He shook his head. Cas burned with the need to tell everyone she met her conspiracy theories, be they about the suppressed news of planets successfully overthrowing their corporate yokes or secretive council death squads. They all came down to how the Sphere citizens were covertly controlled. As if they needed anything more covert than 24-hour Dreadball and reality head-cam shows.

Exhaustion made his eyes burn. "I'm sure it's no big deal. I mean, we can't perform any major surgery without it, I'm just not sure it means anything."

"The hospital's down?"

"Well, yeah. They all share the same connection."

"Just after Seven thirty?"

He guessed where she was going. He was wrong.

"The defence force's connection is down as well."

It took a moment for him to realise what she meant. "The Marines'?"

She nodded. "They're trying to make like there's nothing wrong, and not doing it very well. As of this morning all leave has been cancelled and everyone's been recalled to Prime. That's the first directive for any commanding officer in a tactical situation with no intel: secure your base."

That's the first directive for any commanding officer in a tactical situation with no intel: secure your base

The frightening thing was she made perfect sense. He cut the thought off before it could take root. It was late, he was tired and Cas was on one of her paranoia rants. But he knew better than to argue with her, and even if he wanted to he didn't have the

But still, the idea of being cut off from the Sphere made him uncomfortable. He had never felt so… disconnected.

energy.

"Okay, let's say *it is happening*," he air quoted. "What do we do? And more to the point; why? Gaian's only export is refried vegetable mush. We're not near any trade routes or other planets, we have little military presence. So why?"

"Why is the great question, partner, but knowing we have to find a 'why' is half the fight." She picked up her tea and downed the hot drink in a single pull. Cole winced. "I'm just letting you know. Keep your eyes open, eh?" She went to the door and performed a complicated but well executed check outside before leaving.

His head swam. He didn't believe Cas, of course he didn't. He had become used to her theories, and none of them ever eventuated. But still, the idea of being cut off from the Sphere made him uncomfortable. He had never felt so… disconnected.

He lay down, and when it became obvious sleep would never come, spent the rest of the night flicking through TV channels.

***

The G-Net was still down. Procedures at the hospital had been reprioritised to emergencies first and then anything the doctors felt competent enough to perform without guidance second. But there was another problem.

By Boris Samec

“What, none?”

“Ran out last shift,” said jean.

Skeletal shelves which should have held pallets of boxes were empty, allowing him to see all the way through them to the building’s rear.

By “Hellebore”

“But none? No anaesthetic in the whole hospital?”

“Frak, I don’t know! That’s why you have to go check. You’re more senior, they’ll take you more seriously than me.”

All anaesthesia had been used up in the continuous procedures and operations throughout the last night, according to Jean. He had known they were running low, but then again that was nothing new. The hospital was always running low, but amongst the constant flow of ships and supplies coming in from outsystem to feed an establishing world were the primary supply ships from the corp home planets, stocked with munitions for the marines and medical supplies for the hospitals. The ships’ arrivals were reliable enough that Cole had long accepted the state as a norm.

The situation was confirmed by the supply office manager.

“Not a goddamn one, and will you people please stopping asking for them.”

She looked harried. Her face red with strands of hair dangling loose from her ponytail. Behind her the small warehouse looked bare. Skeletal shelves which should have held pallets of boxes were empty, allowing him to see all the way through them to the building’s rear.

“You do realise,” he began.

“Yes I realise exactly what you can and can’t do without them. I’ve been told a hundred times in two hours, but it does not change that we don’t have anything.”

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Cole closed his eyes and told himself to calm down. When he opened them again he tried to think logically. "When was the last shipment due?"

"Yesterday afternoon," she said without checking. He guessed she'd been asked this a hundred times as well.

When she didn't offer anything more he said, "And? Where is it?"

She stopped scribbling on her pad and banged her pen onto the counter. She looked at him above the rim of her glasses. "If I knew that I would have told you. It just didn't come in, and I don't have anyone spare to go find out why."

"Then I'll do it. Where do I go?" He said it before he realised, but then again what else was he going to do today?

She looked at him a moment longer, then, "Okay." She pulled a sheet from her clipboard and wrote an address before handing it over. "This is the delivery warehouse the goods come from. By all means go find out. And if it's anyone's fault down there, feel free to use your knowledge of pain receptors and pressure points on them."

***

Gaian 16 held several advantages for potential corp settlement. It was located on the brink of a stellar cliff, known locally as The Edge. Near the leading verge of the galaxy arm, it was as close to a true void as any habitable planet yet found by the Sphere. A settlement there could prove invaluable in the future as a testing post for intergalactic travel or weapons which could react badly with any nearby mass.

A peculiarity of evolution had given the planet's vegetation a heavily accelerated growth cycle. Plant growth cut back would grow back to its original size within a day

Secondly, a peculiarity of evolution had given the planet's vegetation a heavily accelerated growth cycle. Plant growth cut back would grow back to its original size within a

By "Daedle"

day. The potential for farming was quickly identified, prompting a short but cut throat bidding war for the planet's contract. And now Gaian 16 was the main provider of reconstituted vegetable matter across the Aquila Rift.

The unique ecology, however, provided equally unique challenges. The floral growth was so accelerated as to be almost predatory. No mega fauna existed anywhere on the planet, and it had been postulated that the ecologically advanced vegetation literally strangled any large animals before they could find an ecological niche. This meant humans had to force themselves sideways into the ecosystem.

The same boon to agriculture, where a patch of ground could be farmed for all vegetable matter to shipped off world one day and would be there next for the same treatment, also meant any settlement had to be actively defended from an ever encroaching rainforest. Burn backs and soil eradiation were daily chores around each township. But even then the plant life found a way, until mould and fungus would find a hold within a structure and grow, eating mortar and forcing apart prefab blocks until the building was unsafe and would have to be demolished and rebuilt.

In a township which might consist of two dozen buildings this was not much of a problem. But when it came to what would be Gaian's capital city, Gaian Prime, the area and building number and size meant a different approach was required. And this was where the Bubble was designed.

It had been postulated that the ecologically advanced vegetation literally strangled any large animals before they could find an ecological niche

An immense conductive alloy canvass, the Bubble stretched over the whole city, anchored at Prime's circumference by being driven eight metres into the ground. The Bubble secreted toxins and was charged with direct current, nullifying any spores or seed which came into contact with it, and allowing the burn back teams which patrolled the perimeter daily, to focus on the plants and not on the buildings on the inside.

The Bubble also provided a secondary benefit to Prime's residents. The mega trees

found on the interior of Gaian 16's continent released wind-borne spores year round. These ranged in size from the bacterial, to the width of a man's fist. The larger variety popped on contact, releasing pollen motes in the millions, each species of which had proven to cause extreme hay fever-like symptoms.

He caught a whiff of the crowd's collective emotion. Anger permeated, but he sensed that just rode the wave of something more substantial beneath

Gaian Prime's location was on the edge of a natural harbour. The bay was most likely an ancient meteor crater, forming an almost perfect circle open at one side to a deep water channel between two of Gaian 16's oceans. The location was perfect for settlement, not only in a naturally calm bay, but also the city built at the bay's eastern shore would face its own harbour westward, away from the prevailing winds from the landmass's interior, and allow the only permanent opening in the Bubble around the sea lane.

It was on this harbour where Prime's warehouse district was located, and where Cole now arrived.

There were dozens of warehouses, the smallest still more than 50 metres wide, and all following the curve of the shore around the bay. And outside each were knots of people. He caught a whiff of the crowd's collective emotion. Anger permeated, but he sensed that just rode the wave of something more substantial beneath.

He followed the directions to the building where the hospital supplies should be held. Judging by the clothes worn by the people gathered outside this one distributed supplies for most of the city's municipal services. And going by how hard they shouted and the words they used it was not just the hospital which had run out.

A man in stood on a pile of pallets at the office's door, speaking loudly and trying to answer three questions at once. Sweat stains darkened around his chest and armpits and he looked if he had had less sleep than Cole.

By "Sneaky Chris"

Without seeing inside he knew the warehouse would be empty. Behind what he took to be the manager, smaller knots of workmen in overalls and heavy gloves lounged around. With nothing to do they talked and cast the occasional worried look to the crowd.

"I wondered how long it would take you."

Cas leant casually against a linked fence, arms crossed with a sardonic smile. She wasn't wearing her pistol, but she was in uniform.

"What you doing here?"

"Seems to be where all the action is." She indicated the crowd. "I wouldn't try and force your way to the front, if I were you. Most of them have been here for a while. It wouldn't take much for them to turn ugly."

He had reached the same conclusion, but was not in the mood to play games. "Noted. But why are you here?"

"Same reason you are, I'd say."

He frowned. "Supplies."

"That's affirmative."

"But… what do the military need supplied?"

"But… what do the military need supplied?"

"Ammo"

"Ammo," she said simply. And when she saw his questioning look, "Did you think we just sit on an ever growing pile of munitions? Ninety percent of what we have is used in training. Since this morning that's been stopped though. No more deliveries have come in."

He frowned. The military would get priority even over the hospitals in corp supply lines.

"Let me show you something." She stepped away, showing the spot she had leant on hid a freshly clipped flap in the chain link. She saw Cole looking and shook her head in a *don't ask questions* way, and he pushed his way through.

By Mantic Games, Used with Permission

The fence led to a gap between two warehouses, opening out on the waterfront. The air flowed more freely here, not nearly as close and with a grating edge of salt to the warm

By Mantic Games, Used with Permission

breeze.

Cargo ships with their typical flat-nosed prows lined the wharves, each almost as large as the buildings they docked at. Every berth was occupied, accompanied by imposing cranes. Here and there trucks were parked in designated bays, toy-like between the monolithic loading equipment and ships.

But no people.

The entire scene, kilometres of dock front, still and silent but for the slap of the waves on piers.

The quiet was unsettling. Cole had been on Gaian for years, and he had never seen such calm, such stillness since arriving onplanet.

The calm continued out to sea. Ships, as many as where in dock now, lay at anchor with nowhere to go.
"It's the same at each warehouse as here," said Cas. "All the workers are either standing around or have been sent home. There's nothing for them to do."

"But why?" he said.

Cas pointed out over the bay, towards the hole in the Bubble where ships could sail freely out to the stretch of open ocean. Outside of the bay a ten kilometre wide channel separated the mainland from an island designated as Gaian's spaceport. It received and launched the super lifters from the upper atmosphere. Set outside the city for safety reasons, its own seaport allowed the constant flow of goods from outsystem

The entire scene, kilometres of dock front, still and silent but for the slap of the waves on piers.

to Gaian to be shipped directly to Prime or the outlying townships. The returning 'lifters were loaded with vegetable matter for shipping to other sectors and systems.

Cole had only been at the port once on the day of his arrival, but it left him with the profound impression of a structure the size of a city, designed and built for the sole purpose of constant unloading and loading, never ceasing, as if it were the lungs of the colony planet.

Only right now, it was as still as the dock he stood on.

"That's not right." Only after he said the words did he realised he whispered them.

"And there's something else," said Cas, and looked upwards.

Only then did he realise he wasn't look at stars, but star ships. Cargo haulers, kilometres long, massive enough to be seen from the ground, hanging motionless in orbit.

He followed her gaze. Stars twinkled low the sky. There was a discord in what he saw, only recognisable when he concentrated; it wasn't even midday yet. Only then did he realise he wasn't look at stars, but star ships. Cargo haulers, kilometres long, massive enough to be seen from the ground, hanging motionless in orbit.

By Mantic Games, Used with Permission

"That's not right," he said again, then to Cas, "why aren't they docking?"

"I think they already have," she said. She waved to the warehouses fanning out behind them. "Their cargo has already been delivered and consumed.

He could only think of one thing it could mean. "There have been no arrivals," he said. Such a thought seemed unnatural. There were always arrivals and departures. Constant burn offs from the spaceport as the massive ships fought to lift themselves through Gaian 16's gravity, like rising suns

every half hour. At night the light reached Cole's own apartment windows and was as part of the background of his routine as the ever present street noise.

Cas nodded. "That's my conclusion. And do you want to know what's really frightening?"

He didn't think he did. Over the past few years he'd settled unto a comfortable if unpleasant life, a routine he had slowly watch come undone over the past day. His eyes were still on the far distant space port, great silvery arms and grey sheet towers reflected light back at him. But no activity. He felt Cas's eyes on him. She didn't wait for a response.

"The brass don't know why. They're trying to pretend they do, but why would they send me out here to find out where everything was if they already knew?"

She joined him looking out at the port, and then up to the ships hanging in the sky. "And have you noticed the ships here haven't left yet? They've been filled with produce but they're just hanging there, like they have no place to go."

"First our connection to the Sphere goes, and then ships stop arriving," he said. There was nothing he had ever heard about a planet being suddenly cut off. Surely if something had happened, even for short time, it would be all over the news?

"First our connection to the Sphere goes, and then ships stop arriving,"

"Seems too much of a coincidence to me"

"Seems too much of a coincidence to me," said Cas. "Which begs your question; why?"

By Mantic Games, Used with Permission

Cole could not begin to imagine, but was suddenly overwhelmed with the sensation that he very much did not want to find out.▪

....END OF PART 1....

For more stories like this, visit Michael's blog at www.michaelgrey.com.au

Reb Judwan Medics by Nicodemus Sandberg

The Iron Forge

Welcome to the Iron Forge. This is the first in what we hope will become a regular and popular feature for the Ironwatch magazine.
Ironwatch has lacked a recurring feature specifically showcasing painted Mantic models and so I proposed the idea of putting a team together to Austin (Ironwatch's editor). I then approached a number of well-known faces in the Mantic community who have all demonstrated their painting skills and luckily none of them turned me down!
The team's initial goal is to produce one newly painted Mantic model each for every issue of the magazine. While real life might mean not everyone can make it every month, I'm hoping we gain enough momentum to make this a real success and can also start to call on guest painters for some issues too. We'll also be happy to feature dioramas, full units, teams or whole armies – anything that provides inspiration and creativity to really show off Mantic's great range of models.

If the community like the new feature we can get more creative, with tutorials, tip and

By Nick Williams

tricks, themed issues and the like. Your feedback and ideas are most welcome to help us gauge the reaction to this new venture and what you would like to see.

The Iron Forge Painting Team are:
Matt Gilbert, Nick Williams, Christian Schlumpberger, Claudia Zuminich, Paul Scott and Darren Lysenko. Of course, Austin has said he might chip in too :)

Please use the Ironwatch feedback threads on the Mantic forums to let us know what you think. I hope you enjoy this month's inaugural set of pictures.

-Matt▪

By Darren Lysenko

By Chris Schlumpberger

Chris Schlumpberger

The Veer-myn Night Lord has always been one of my favorite Warpath models. The gruesome drill, the vicious chem weapon, the whole beast is simply powerful and nasty as hell. Unfortunately the painting process for the Night Lord was not as funny as I had hoped. I had to redo some sections over and over again until I was finally satisfied and even then I applied weathering, dust and blood splatter to cover some mistakes (you have to use some dirty tricks if necessary :)). The main paintjob was done with red primer, base colors and army painter shade, followed by lots of detail work and a little

Chris Schlumpberger

OSL with my airbrush. Even though this is probably not my best model and way below the level of my fellow painters of the Iron Forge, I'm pretty happy with the result and already looking forward to next month.

Cłaudia Zuminich

The Goblin War Trombone is a very detailed model, casting in metal. Both, the war machine and the crew have an steampunk style, ideal for painting metals and Leathers. For Trombone base body, I used metallic paints that can be polished, which gives a realistic texture and appearance to the forged iron canyon. Finally the weathering gives an sloppy Goblin appearance.

DARREN LYSENKO

When I was looking for a Giant for my Kings of War Orc army, I think I took it all a bit too literally because "Blind Mungo", as I lovingly call him, actually *is* a giant orc - a 3-up resin cast of an Orc Ax from Mantic's 'Collector's Range', to be exact.

The reason Mungo is in fact 'blind' is completely down to indecision on my part. I really wanted to give him one solid brass prosthetic eye. I was also desperate to give him a really pale and milky, sightless eye. In the end, I decided to do both, meaning that my Krudger can now only point this flailing behemoth in the right direction at the start of the battle and hope for the best...

MATT GILBERT

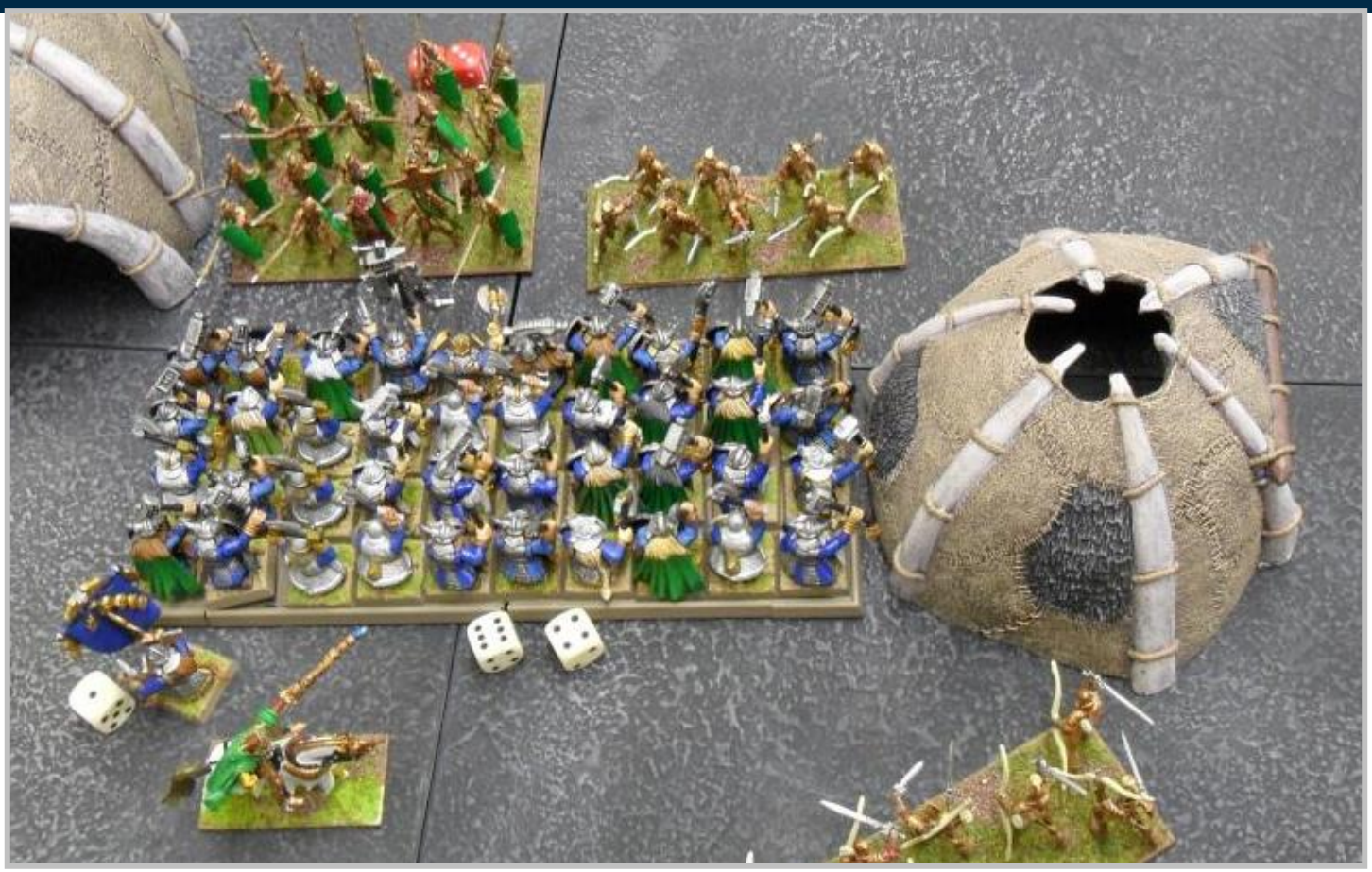
I assembled this model months ago and it's been sitting on the shelf since then while I painted KoW and DB models. Our new painting feature was the perfect excuse to finally paint it.

I started with a white undercoat rather than black as favored by a lot of people at the moment. I had also decided that the skin would be traditional green and that I wanted yellow in there somewhere to as a dominant color. Beyond that, the model almost painted itself as I went along. Painting the fist red unbalanced the model so making the opposing shoulder the same color helped redress that and then the red tongue finished it off, creating a triple-point of spot color.

I know a lot of people paint whole discreet areas in one go before moving to the next but I'm more traditional and tend to paint a whole model at once.

Whether this color scheme is reflected in the rest of my Marauder army when I get round to it, I'll let the brushes decide.

Nick Williams



MORE JOURNEYS BY THE WEEDY ELVES

By Weedyelf

"So when is the next one?"

The question I got bombarded with the day after our first tournament. It was a huge success, with 8 players turning up with a variety of armies. Dice were cast, there were cheers and groans as players tried to out smart each other, and lady luck helped or hindered!

So another was definitely needed. So with a bit of pre planning another was penciled in, hosted at the same venue, Total Wargamer. With about 2 months notice, everyone had plenty of time to sign up, paint and play test! This time it was 1600 points, and no unique characters or allies. But otherwise things remained the same, with the simple objective or destroy your opponent and score as much tournament points and attrition points as you could!

The run up to the tournament saw an opportunity to try out some changes to the list I had used at the first tourney. The Cardiff Regional was a few weeks before hand and rules set was almost identical to our own. So along with Pathfinder Chris and a motley bunch of mad wargamers, we made the journey to FireStorm games.

For this tourney, I dropped the horde of bowmen with the jar of four winds. While it

opponent who had a single hero left at the end. However such victories were short lived, as "Darklord" and "LordofSmurfs" were my next opponents, both excellent players who managed to table me in both games and they went on to claim 1st and 2nd. Bad luck being drawn against the top 2 players maybe but it was a vital learning curve. I left Firestorm a wiser man, with new gaming buddies and a few boxes of Elven scouts. And a plan.

was very handy unleashing 20 attacks at long range, it was a huge points sink (335!) so I split it up into 2 bowmen regiments, and also split the palace guard into 2 half-regiments with musicians. With this new set up I had more units to play with, but a little less durable combat troops and shortened my overall range with missile attacks. But I reasoned the extra units and ability to deliver crushing strength in 2 places I reasoned would be handy. I wasn't quite happy with the list however, I would've preferred to take scout regiments to save some points.

So arrived the tournament me and Pathfinder Chris had put together. Things had changed a bit more. The horde was still

Cardiff Regional proved a tougher test, I found myself once again up against a regular opponent as my first game (as it had been in the TWG tourney before!) and to our shock and horror not only did we, for the first time ever, manage a result other than a draw, but it was a crushing defeat for my

By "Panda"

gone, but so were the archers. The palace guard had reformed back into a regiment, the archer regiment had become a scout regiment, and an additional 2 scouts troops were added to the army, giving me 6 scout troops. I also managed to squeeze a mage on horse in there too. 70 ranged attacks plus 4 bolt throwers and zap should, in theory, give me a powerful first couple of turns that should break units before they even clash with my spears and greatswords.

12 players turned out this time, a large increase on the last tournament! However the variety of armies seemed less, a lot of undead and Dwarf armies made a show. Players from the Cardiff regional also made a show, our tournaments had gained some renown already it seemed! My first game was drawn and I was against a fellow Elf player!

He was still fairly new to KoW but like most who take it up, he had learned the game quickly and was instead learning how to play effectively. He brought to the table a fierce looking army, 5 bolt throwers out numbered my 4, and 3 troops of Drakons backed up by spearmen and worst of all, a Dragon. With The Fog. I set my bolt throwers up on the

machines concentrated on trying to destroy his. The Dragon, hiding in the woods, was pounded by zap again and again, the fog and trees offering no protection to magic. Turn after turn it wavered, its inspiring preventing it breaking. The game ended with the Dragon, bleeding but still alive. Its huge points value meant I had won, but not by as much points as it seemed.

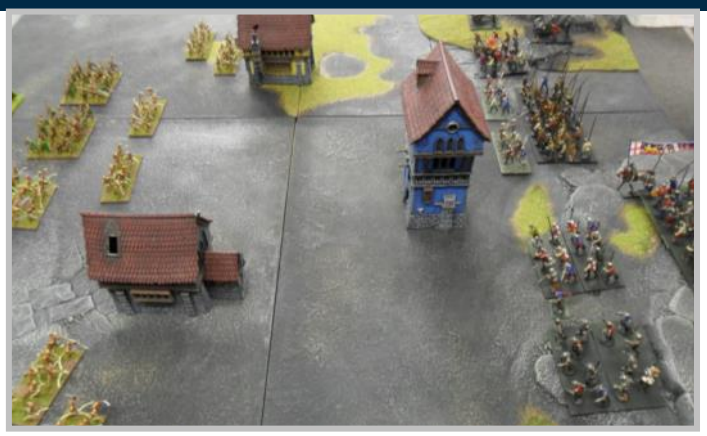
hill to my left, put my 4 regiments in front across the hill and towards the ruined building, and scouts in front of them. I also put 2 troops of scouts in the wood on my right. He set up his drakons opposite my bolt throwers, spears in the middle, and that annoying Dragon on his left.

I fired with everything I had, causing some damage on his bolt throwers and wavering a troop of drakons. However he hit my scouts in the forest with his dragon, who toasted them up before wiping them out in combat the following turn. His other drakons crashed into the palace guard who just held their ground. The other troop of drakons fled from some more bow-fire and the other drakons fled from a devastating flank charge. The Dragon, having only taken minimal damage continued munching on my scouts, leaving my right flank empty. With his Drakons destroyed, his Spears arrived and clashed with my own. The stalemate was only broken by a flank charge by a scout regiment. His bolt throwers continued to pound my regiments which had become dangerously close, while my own war-

Game 2 I was drawn against Dwarves. Who brought a horde of Ironclad, 2 shield breakers, IronGuard and 5 cannons with a warsmith. This game was a blood bath. We both saw the Orc huts in the centre, and knowing that despite the smell, they offered great protection to ours units flanks. Our centers clashed, his IronGuard collapsed under the volume of attacks but his horde quickly moved in to prevent my units moving through. Scout troops on the left managed to overwhelm shield breakers by surrounding them and tried to move around the back of the horde, but Dwarf cannons put a stop to that. My war-machines attacked his cannons in turn, but a Berserker Lord with the Fly ability managed to cut his way through a scout troop, a scout regiment, and then he pulled apart 2 bolt throwers in a vulgar display of contempt for Elvish technology. My Spears finally broke under the pressure of the IronClads and the Dwarves seized the middle. However with so little left on each side it was a draw with no clear winner.

Game 3 saw me once again, playing my regular opponent and his Pike heavy Kingdom of Men army. That meant that in every tournament we had played against each other. Would it be another predictable draw, or could I pull off another slaughter? Or did fate dictate that it was his turn to win? I put my regiments in the middle, with bolt throwers on my right. Scouts all spread out ahead of the army with the intention of using the buildings to prevent his numerous Bill troops out moving me. He spread out across his deployment zone, Bill troops in front with pike hordes following closely. His 5 war-machines on the hills behind. I quickly dispatched of one of his mortars and wavered some Bill, but otherwise a disappointing first strike. He surged forward undeterred, forming a line in the middle of the buildings. A Hero with the Wings (again, less scary than a Berserker though) charged my scouts who held, and stabbed back but failed to kill him. He spied my war-machines and flew over my scouts, and started picking apart my bolt throwers until a well placed zap spell put a stop to that. His Knight troop moved forward too quick, meaning a flank charge by my scouts was able to drag them from their mounts. Our 2 lines clashed and anything smaller than a regiment perished in a single turn. His Pike hordes then connected and my Elves fled before their fierce attacks. Things started to look bleak, but with damage mounting on his hordes I knew it could change quickly. With his 2 pike hordes now at close range, I charged my palace guard into the one with the Fog, hoping the charge would break them or my last combat regiment would be doomed, and fired everything on his other approaching from the right. It fell apart from the barrage of arrows, bolts and zap. The Billmen Regiment fled from a volley from the Scout regiment, and a scout troop saw off his Bill Troop. It was now up to the Palace Guard to break his horde, which they managed. His centre and left was broken, with only combat troops on his right to commit. A brief exchange saw neither achieve anything, and the game ended..... a draw. Back to tradition.

So with 1 win, and 2 draws but a large attrition score to back it up from the Dwarf



and Men game, we gathered to listen to the scores. Pathfinder Chris had been on a rampage and scored first place. Dwarf player Jack Evans collected 2nd place and I had placed.... 3rd! Not as good as first from the previous tourney but still a top 3 place which I was more than happy with the lack of wins. Quite a few people had finished on 5 tournament points but a good attrition score meant I was just ahead.

So after all of that, I got back and logged on to my computer what was the message greeting me?

"So when is the next one?"▪

The Haunting Promise

By Kenny Moncrieff

By Stuart Smith

Her reflection in the wine made Velna realise just how she had become. Her long dark hair was loose, her face was grim as a dwarf and her eyes were like that of a daemon.

"So what is the reason you summoned me?"

Velna patiently lifted her head up to the other Twilight kin opposite to her of the dining table. He was bigger than their kind in more than one way, especially with his overbearing armour.

"Yes. I wanted to inform you lord Helm that I'll be seizing control of your forces."

"My forces? You mean my entire army?" chuckled Helm. "And what makes you think I'm handing it over?"

"Because I'll be inheriting it."

The elf's eyes squinted. "I had no idea you were into jokes Velna. I always understood you were as dull as the breeze and yet just as refreshing." Helm cocked his head. "How about you become one of my wives then we can talk about inheritance."

"No need."

"Hmp. Okay then, how about explaining to me how is it that you'll be inheriting my army? I have five children, two wives and over a dozen cousins?"

Velna rested her chin on her wrists. "I'll inherit your army, because once your dead, the general is the older brother of mine. So he'll merge with my army in hopes of seizing command. Many in your soldiers won't oppose this unless they want to be passed onto another member of your family. However the problem is that you were the only one competent in your family. Nearly everyone, including your wives have been nothing but ingrate sloths or have the brains of trolls that without you, many of them would be dead or on the streets. Your cousins and sons could merge their armies of course to make yours assimilate by force, but

three of your cousins are at bitter war with each other, one your sons is far too lazy and the rest will be too afraid. Therefore there is no obstacle to stop me from taking what was once yours."

The lord looked a lot smaller with that dumb look on his face. "Th-that's of course if I'm dead."

"But you are dead. You drank the 'moments of undeath' poison. Your entire body is numb which is why your brains failing to register that no blood is being pumped..."

Helm dropped his cup and seemed to have spotted the black splodges in the wine. "B-but your family has always had a tradition of never harming their guests."

"You actually believe that. My family has always been deceitful scum that has never cared what others think of them, so long as we have power."

"B-but-."

"I really did think you'd be more challenge Helm. In fact I was concerned that there'd be war and I'd be crushed. Risky I know, but I really do need your army. It's strange however that the once great Lord Helm was brought down by trusting another Twilight kin. Probably-." Helm banged against the table. "How rude. He died before I could finish."

It's strange however that the once great Lord Helm was brought down by trusting another Twilight kin

"Maybe couldn't take any more of your blathering," snickered Maegar Gilfer. "Probably what really killed him."

"Then why are you still alive?"

"Does it matter?" asked Isen Starslayer. The brooding Twilight leaned over the table. "I think everyone will know your family's so-called tradition is now nothing but a tale."

"If we weren't so good at covering up Isen, we wouldn't have a so-called family

By Darren Lysenko

By Grant Mahoney

tradition."

"Hmp, the fact that your family is steeped in lies and deceit wonders how I can trust you."

Velna snatched Isen off his feet, onto her laps and pressed her lips against him. When she was finished, she gazed at his stunned face. "That is why." Isen was a greedy slime that took what was being dangled over him. The idea he had a chance of marrying her, gave him dreams of sharing her vast power. Maegar snickered.

Maegar use to be the heir of a powerful lord, but a nasty accident with some apparent soup melted half his face off

"Wh-what are you laughing at!" shouted Isen.

"Your face!"

Velna threw Isen off him and he crashed into the plates making Maegar laugh louder. The kin was unpredictable and irritating, but his lack of ambition and relying on others was what made Velna able to trust him.

Isen thumped against the table frustrated. "At least I have more than half a face you scum!" Maegar kept laughing.

Maegar use to be the heir of a powerful lord, but a nasty accident with some apparent soup, melted half his face off. A slave in the knowledge of healing saved him in hopes of a reward. But the first thing Maegar did once he found his life was ruined was maul the healer. He was soon exiled by his family for a very suspicious reason.

These two were the closes trustful retinue she could find, at the moment.

"Lady Velna," said a messenger. He glanced at the body.

"Speak."

By "Dusty"

"The admiral has regrettably withdrawn from the expedition."

"Maegar, I want that messenger killed if you will."

Velna leered. "Why?"

"He would not explain."

"Quite a dilemma," said Isen. "We'll look weak if admiral Ritrek leaves our forces."

And no one made Velna look weak. She got up. "Where is admiral Ritrek."

"At the Heartgutted Inn my lady."

"Thank you."

The messenger immediately left.

"Maegar, I want that messenger killed if you will."

"As you command my lady."

"Isen, stay here and clean up, I'll deal with admiral Ritrek on my own."

"Why did you want someone like that as the head of our fleet? He is an oaf of a Twilight kin that made the rank of admiral by luck."

"Because admirals ask questions before they are willing sail a ship. Ritrek is too desperate to be asking questions and I'll remind him of that."

*

Velna entered the dank inn of Heartgutted. There were kin slumped over tables and floors, perhaps dead. Others were having slurred conversations. Some also eyed her. Velna just walked pass them. She was in her family armour; a lowborn kin had some wits not to touch her, no matter how drunk.

"Hey, if it isn't Lady Velna!" yelled someone. At a table sat a kin more dwarf than a proper elf. He had a long musty beard, stout body and hardened flesh. Only thing that drove him apart from a dwarf was his height, pointy ears and spiteful jealous eyes. "Here for me are you! Come have a seat!" He then bolstered. "Let's talk about how I'm stepping off this voyage!"

Velna slid beside him and gazed. The kin stuck out his chest and raised his chin. He then puffed out laughter.

"Sorry, I find it amusing you actually came to this place. A lord or lady wouldn't be caught half dead coming here. They'd normally sick their dogs to get what they wanted. Especially the inn's beer, it's pretty good, want some?" He held his tankard out to her.

Shouldn't be surprised. This army, this really huge army, the fleet and yet you couldn't get a captain better than me

"Oh? Are you upset that Admiral Ritrek's left your crew? Shouldn't be surprised. This army, this really huge army, the fleet and yet you couldn't get a captain better than me. There's a whole lot of fancy admirals you could've gotten, yet you got me to be the head of your fleet. Well that could only mean you couldn't get any other admiral and you know what that tells me. You're not getting me either. Got anything to say? Well? Say something?"

Words would only have caused more problems. Velna slugged Ritrek and he hit the floor. She stamped on him and strung his head up by the hair.

"I don't have time for you to be fooling around Ritrek. I have expedition almost ready and I don't want you to interfere any more than you already are." She touched his face. "And to remind you that I don't allow games." She slashed him.

Velna then left. She drifted back into the streets and walked amongst its slums. Not much could be said for the lowborn kin home. It had more light than anywhere else, but that was a bad thing. The Twilight kin had become more accustomed to the dark and the abyssal gods favoured the dark, so darkness was treated as a commodity. Velna already felt discomforted by the tinge of light.

By Nick Williams

“Good evening Lady Velna Bloodrain.”

Sauntering out from the shadows was a scantly robed woman with jewellery and wielding a nightmarish staff.

“High Priestess Loverit Deathmaker.”

The priestess smiled as innocent as a feline. “Taking a stroll through the dark streets? Highborn don’t last long here.”

“I wasn’t planning on staying long. Now what do I owe the pleasures?”

“Oh, so demanding as ever Lady Velna. Could I just call you Velna? You’ve never been much of a lady.”

“You’d watch your tongue, Loverit.”
The priestess cocked her head. “I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to sound mean. How about I just get back to your question? I want to ask if I can join your expedition.”

“No.”

“Oh don’t say that. You’ll make me upset.”

“You heard my answer now be gone.”

Velna moved away, but an imp creature jumped in her way grinning joyfully.

“But your answer isn’t what I wanted it to be.”

The Lady glared.

“Don’t give me that look. It’s rude.”

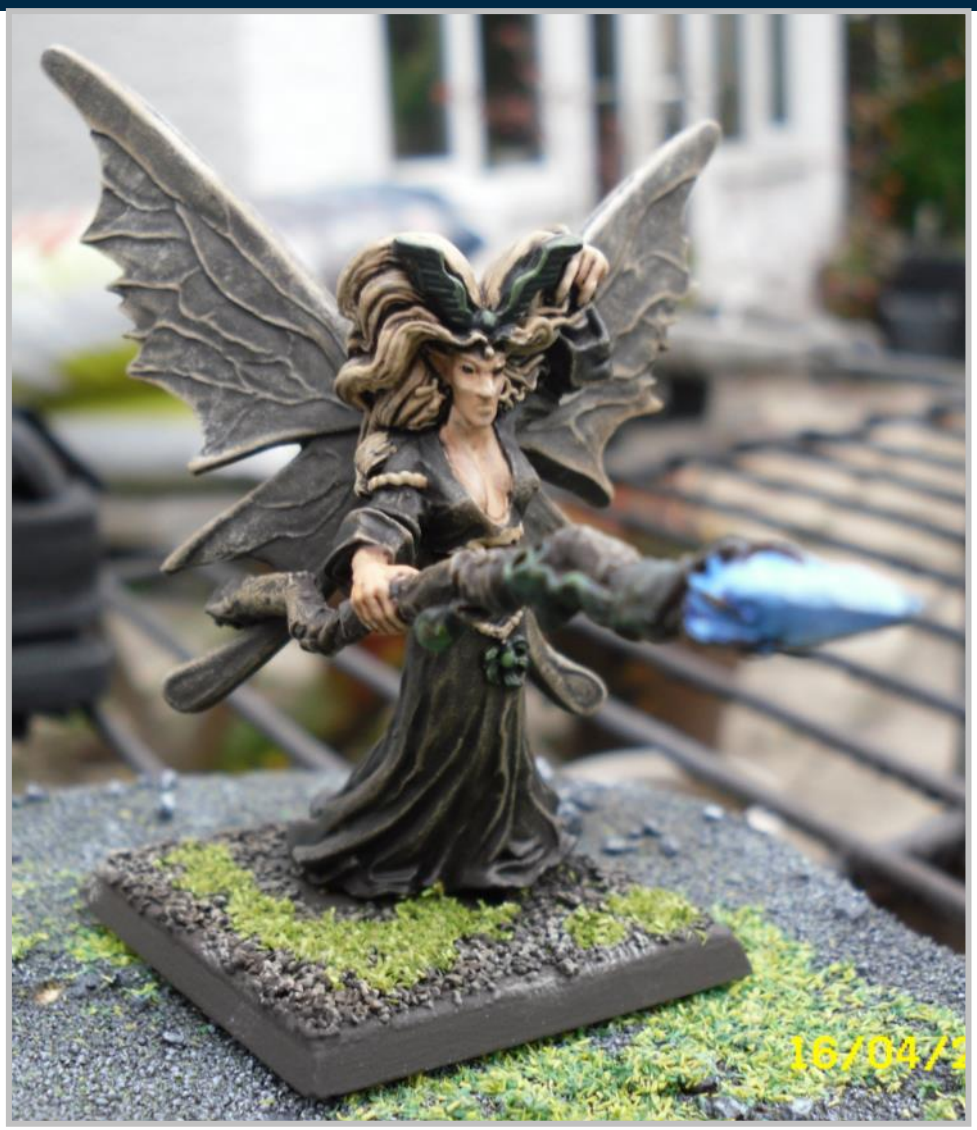
By “ManticFanBoyLAD”

“Then get your pet out of my way before I step on it.”

“Sigh, there’s just no helping you Velna.”

“Taking a stroll through the dark streets? Highborn don’t last long here.”

“Why do you want to come on my expedition?”



By Jonathan Faulkes

"Becomes I'm interested. Most the high priestess are. But I'm the only one willing to jump in on this voyage and find out just what is your purpose. So deny me, the other high priestess will want to come aboard as well."

I'm interested. Most the high priestess are. But I'm the only one willing to jump in on this voyage and find out just what is your purpose

Loverit was right. There was not much Velna could do if she turned away one of their own kind. It would only starve the cult's curiosity. "Fine." Velna stormed off.

"Okay, see you on the voyage!" shouted Loverit waving.▪

By Darren Lysenko

Kings of War Bestiary

By Matt Gilbert

Many of us have large model collections, often representing many years of being in the hobby and from a wide variety of manufacturers. Often in these large collections lurk huge models that fire the imagination, look amazingly cool, but all too often do little more than occupy shelf space.

This is the first article in what is hoped to be a way of addressing this unfortunate state of affairs. It's a call to arms for the giants and behemoths of Mantica and offers them a chance to stride forth from the shadows from where they wait to demonstrate their might on the table-top.

These big models are intended for use in big games of Kings of War. As a rule of thumb, multiple the value of the unit by 10 to calculate the recommended minimum army size in which to include it. Otherwise, treat them as simply additional Monster choices for the army (or armies) indicated. So for example, the Undead Dragon is 250 points so you should only consider taking one in an army of 2500 points or more.

If you have any of your own monsters you would like to have included to help expand this Bestiary, please let us know with the proposed rules and preferably a picture and we'll consider your submission for inclusion.

New Special Rules

Colossus

Any unit with this rule can stride over obstacles with ease and treats any such terrain as clear, open ground. They will never suffer any penalties for crossing or fighting over obstacles (fences and hedges are not going to stop a Titan…).

Thunderous Charge
If a unit with this rule declares a Charge! and the distance from the unit to the nearest point of the target is equal to or greater than the Charging unit's Speed value, it will gain Crushing Strength (1) in the following Melee phase against the target unit. If the unit already has Crushing Strength, the value is increased by 1 in the following Melee. Essentially, if the unit has enough ground to build momentum for its charge, the impact will be greater.

By Matt Gilbert

Terrifying
When testing the Nerve of an enemy unit in combat with one or more of your units with this special rule, you can add +2 to your total, as the horrifying aura of the units takes its toll on the foe's morale.

Monsters:

Undead War-mammoth with Catapult: 250 points
Type: Monster
Army: Undead

Name	Sp	Me	Ra	De	At	Ne
War-mammoth	5	4+	5+	5+	1/10*	-/19

Special: Shambling, Crushing Strength (3), Piercing (2), Indirect, Blast (2D6), Evil Dead *1 ranged attack with the catapult (48" range) and 10 Melee attacks. *Note that the unit doesn't have the Reload! rule as the beast counts as a "stable" platform. However, there will still be a -1 if it moves and fires.*

Undead War-mammoth: 200 points
Type: Monster
Army: Undead

Name	Sp	Me	Ra	De	At	Ne
War-mammoth	5	4+	-	5+	12	-/19

Special: Shambling, Crushing Strength (3), Evil Dead

Undead Dragon: 250 points
Type: Monster
Army: Undead

Name	Sp	Me	Ra	De	At	Ne
Undead Drag-on	10	4+	-	5+	10	-/18

Special: Fly, Crushing Strength (2), Evil Dead

Giant Undead Dragon: 575 points
Type: Monster
Army: Undead

Name	Sp	Me	Ra	De	At	Ne
Giant Undead Dragon	12	4+	-	5+	20	-/30

Special: Fly, Crushing Strength (3), Evil Dead

Titan: 400 points
Type: Monster
Army: Any
A giant among giants…

Name	Sp	Me	Ra	De	At	Ne
Titan	6	4+	-	6+	10	18/20

Special: Crushing Strength (4), Colossus, Blast(D3)
*Roll for the number of Attacks each time this unit fights a Melee

Undead Titan: 400 points
Type: Monster
Army: Undead

Name	Sp	Me	Ra	De	At	Ne
Undead Titan	6	5+	-	6+	4D6*	-/20

Special: Shambling, Crushing Strength (4), Evil Dead, Colossus
*Roll for the number of Attacks each time this unit fights a Melee

Steppe Hunter: 275 points
Type: Monster
Army: Any
This unit represents any suitably massive wolf/bear/cat model you want to unleash

Name	Sp	Me	Ra	De	At	Ne
Steppe Hunter	7	3+	-	5+	12	16/18

Special: Crushing Strength (2), Vicious, Thunderous Charge

Mountain Drake: 650 points
Type: Monster
Army: Any
This unit represents any suitably massive dragon model you may have in your collection

Name	Sp	Me	Ra	De	At	Ne
Mountain Drake	12	3+	-	7+	18	20/22

Special: Fly, Crushing Strength (3), Breath Attack (20).

By Paul Scott

By Mantic Games, Used with Permission

Elven War-God: 350 points
Type: Monster
Army: Elves
This unit gives anyone with a Mantic Elf 3-up model to field it in a game

Name	Sp	Me	Ra	De	At	Ne
Elven War-God	7	3+	-	5+	12	18/20

Special: Crushing Strength (3), Elite, Inspiring

Dwarfen Hold Guardian: 350 points
Type: Monster
Army: Dwarfs
This unit gives anyone with a Mantic Dwarf 3 -up model to field it in a game

Name	Sp	Me	Ra	De	At	Ne
Dwarfen Hold Guardian	5	4+	-	6+	15	18/20

Special: Crushing Strength (4), Headstrong, Inspiring

By Mantic Games, Used with Permission

Dragon-kin: 400 points
Type: Monster
Army: Any Evil army
A monstrous amalgam of ogre and dragon or other foul beast of the wild

Name	Sp	Me	Ra	De	At	Ne
Dragon Kin	8	4+	-	6+	18	22/24

Special: Crushing Strength (2), Headstrong, Vicious, Thunderous Charge

Hydra: 380 points
Type: Monster
Army: Any Neutral or Evil army
A many headed monstrosity that lairs deep within mountain caves

Name	Sp	Me	Ra	De	At	Ne
Hydra	5	4+	-	5+	15	18/20

Special: Crushing Strength (2), Breath Attack (12) x 2*
*The Hydra may fire both Breath Attacks in the same Shoot phase and may target a

different enemy unit with each, or may use both on the same target. Nominate all targets first and then roll the dice.

Jabberwock: 320 points
Type: Monster
Army: Any Good or Neutral
Solitary creatures found in the foothills of Mantica they are slow, powerful flyers.

Name	Sp	Me	Ra	De	At	Ne
Jabberwock	6	4+	-	6+	16	16/18

Special: Crushing Strength (3), Fly

Abyssal Nightmare: 600 points
Type: Monster
Army: Twilight Kin, Abyssal Dwarf or Forces of the Abyss
Greater Demons from the fiery depths of the Abyss. To summon a Nightmare is to sell your soul to the devil itself.

Name	Sp	Me	Ra	De	At	Ne
Nightmare	10	3+	-	7+	5D6*	-/20

Special: Crushing Strength (4), Fly, Very Inspiring, Terrifying
*Roll for the number of Attacks each time this unit fights a Melee.▪

By Boris Samec

By Jonathan Faulkes

Elven Tactics

By Jason Flint

Welcome fellow wargamer to a series of articles on how, in my opinion at least, is the best way to use your Elven army. Remember that in this game, you cannot expect to win by building a power based army. The game is about moving and out-witting your opponent. This guide is for those who are thinking about an Elven army, and are wandering where to start or what to do, or for some reason are struggling to make them work.

So to do this, I will have to break things down and explain them in sections. In this first article I will cover the Elven army as a whole, and the core Infantry units which should make up the bulk of your force, and I will also cover the 2 War Machine options. This means that everything in the 1 player battleset is covered, which is a good starting point for an Elven Army.

The Elven Army

The Elven army is a quick moving, but very fragile army. With a basic move of 6, they can outpace men and run circles around Dwarves. Don't over look this single extra point of movement, "At the Double" this becomes an extra 2", and more importantly for chargers, there is no reason why you should not dictate the chargers and who fights who. In most circumstances against enemy infantry, they will have to move within your charge range to charge

themselves, giving you the option of whether to break ranks and counter charge, or hold the line. On the offensive side, you can move to within charge range without leaving your own units vulnerable to an enemy charge.

The price of this speed is survivability. A Elf warrior, clad in Elven armor with a large shield is defense 4+, and for the core of your army this is a good as it gets. Very few units have Def 5+, and rarer still is Def 6+. Whereas many armies have access to heavy infantry in the form of Revenants, Foot Guard and Iron Guard, the Elven 'Heavy Infantry' comes in the form of Palace Guard, who while they pack a punch in combat, have a mighty Defense of....4+.

The Elves are also a very professional army. This is represented by a few things, their high Nerve despite their fragility, means they will often stick about a bit longer even when they take a lot of damage that would rout men. They have great stats to hit in both range and melee with most units. Their ranged units come with both a base Range and Melee of 4+, so even these units can be committed to combat with a good chance of inflicting some damage, as well hitting targets at long range. Finally is the army special rule, "Elite". This allows a single attack dice to be re-rolled for each unit. The use of this varies from unit to unit, some not noticing it, others are dependant on it.

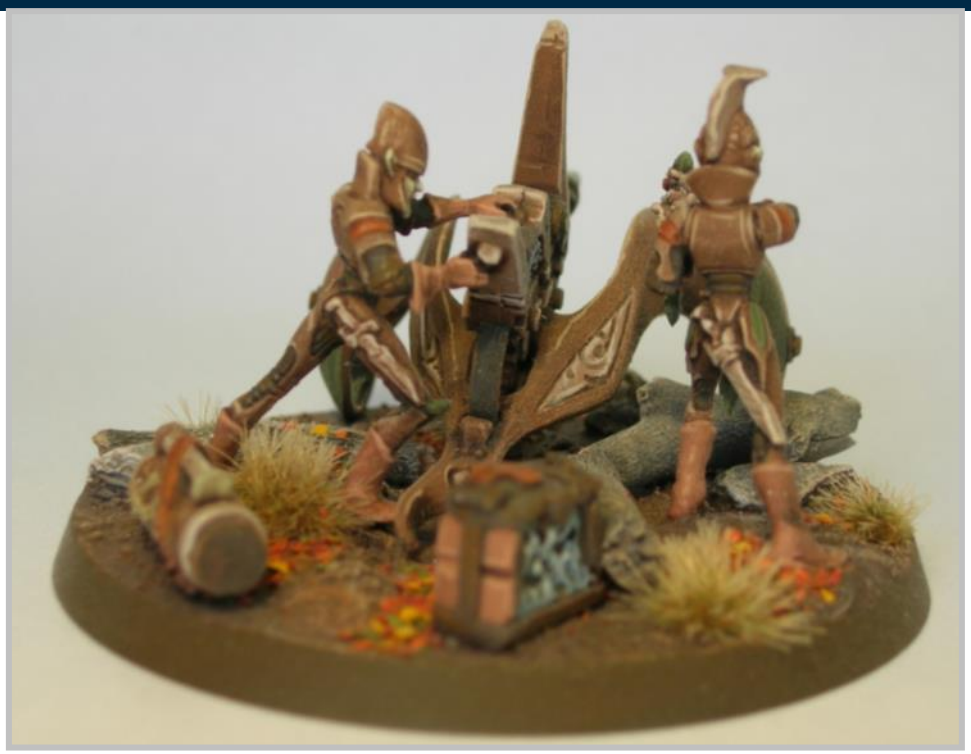
For all of this, Elves are expensive in points. Compared to other units armies can choose from, Elves are a pricey army to use. One of the worst comparisons is seeing how many units and undead army will take compared to yours!

So a fast moving, elite but very fragile force. For this article I will run over the core Infantry units and Warmachines.

Spearmen.

These are the backbone of your army. Phalanx as standard and 4+ to hit in combat means they often kick out a lot of damage. Never take these in anything less than a Regiment, you are wasting points and the potential of these. A Regiment will give you the bonus attacks and the Nerve high enough to go against elite enemy infantry. These are a fantastic choice in your force. Hordes are downright dangerous, with 30 attacks they will butcher most small units they touch, and boost them with a magic item (Brew of strength is a good choice) and they will start chopping through tougher units too. If you play defensively, often the

By "Maccwar"



By Matt Gilbert

first things to hit your lines will be enemy cavalry and flyers, so these are your front line units and are good at both defensive and aggressive styles of play.

Bowmen.

With Range 4+, these are incredibly accurate with their bows, unleashing a volley of shots from these at close range will often leave your opponent with a nervous twitch. They carry shields, meaning their Defense is still 4+, the same as Spearmen. However do not mistake these as having the same role as Spearmen, who having Phalanx, have a better chance of survival against the things that will hit your line first (Cavalry and Flyers typically) Bowmen carry a high cost tag, 120 points for a troop and 160 for a Regiment! Meaning a Regiment of Spearmen is cheaper than a troop of these. I would not recommend taking troops of these, as their extremely high points cost means they are easy points for your opponent who is likely to rout them after 6 points of damage. Even taking a Regiment of them requires some serious thinking about what else you could take for that points cost. A horde with a magic item (The Jar of 4 winds comes to mind) can be very expensive, but the combined effect of magic item on high volume of attacks makes this the more worthy choice of the 3.

Scouts.

These are a great choice for your army, and ideally you should always include a couple of these. They drop their shields, meaning their defense is a terrible 3+! But, for this, Troops gain "Nimble" and "Vanguard" and cost 105 points, compared to their rival bowmen costing 120. The importance of these 2 special rules cannot be stated enough. Vanguard allows you to move them forward after deployment, and if you're not on the attack, don't feel you need to move them the whole distance. Simply bringing your opponent into range with the vanguard move (as you must deploy 24" apart, meaning on Turn 1 your bows are out of range) means if you take turn 1, you won't have to move your scouts to be in range, meaning your initial shots will hit on 5+, rather than 6+. "Nimble" will come in use as your opponent closes in on you, and you can maneuver your scout units to threaten their flanks. With a base of 10 attacks at Melee 4+, your opponent cannot ignore a flank charge from these, potentially doubling to 20 attacks! Troops of these are a winner every

time, Regiments of these however loose their special rules. However at 20 points cheaper than Bowmen, do not rule them out as a cheaper way of getting solid units of bowfire onto the table.

SeaGuard.

These are over pointed. By a lot. While the unit on paper looks fierce, the combination of phalanx and bows, you must look at what you can get for those points. The only time these units are credible is when you know the battle ahead will be packed and you will have little space to move. But even then when I used these units in such battles, they simply were not credible. Sorry folks but this is one unit I will say "Do Not Use".

Palace Guard

These are your Elite infantry, packing Melee 3+ with crushing strength, when these guys connect they will take a chunk out of your opponents units! Despite sacrificing a shield, they retain their Def 4+ thanks to some seriously well made armor. Palace Guard lack the option of Hordes, but give you the option of Half Regiments and Troops, a Troop being just 5 models and a Half Regiment being what we commonly know as Troops (10 models). While 50 points for a 5 man unit is a good way to use up some spare points, I don't recommend that you take these as standard. 5 attacks is not enough to do the damage that you need to. Half Regiments work a treat if you mingle them amongst your spearmen, though boost them up to a Regiment if you intend for them to fight it out on the main line. This unit should hit once and ideally waver or break your opponents unit, as you do not want them counter charged. They are still as fragile as any other of your units.

With the core infantry units covered, I will do my best to you a run down on whether to take Banners and Musicians for units. This is a long running debate, and ultimately there is no right or wrong answer.

Banners

At 15 points this is pricey. Remember that a troop of Spearmen is 80, and a Regiment 110, meaning you pay 30 points for that Nerve increase of 3. However a Banner effectively gives you +1 Nerve, for 15 points.

Based on this, I don't recommend Banners on Troops. For the most part anyway, a Troop which has took a lot of damage is likely to flee anyway. A Regiment with a Banner however, is much more durable. But again, which units will require it? If you have

By "Weedyelf"

By Paul Scott

a unit which you hide until the time is right to use it, is a Banner really necessary? Whereas units which will attract a lot of attention and will no doubt see a lot of combat, the extra help really does sometimes save them. I recommend taking Banners for your Spearmen Regiments, to further increase their durability.

Musicians

At 10 points these are a bit cheaper of the 2, but have a more limited use. They only work in melee and give you +1 to your Nerve checks against enemy units. So, paying 10 points for one means that you have made your opponents 15 point banner ineffective. Also remember that the blade of slashing is 5 points, which still requires you to hit, and damage, for what is effectively the same thing. So for what it delivers a musician seems much more worthwhile. But they are still points down the drain if they are not used. Don't waste them on ranged units, or ones where breaking your opponent instantly is less important. I recommend putting musicians in Palace Guard units, as you really want these guys to break whoever they touch, and sometimes investing that 10 points is often worth it.

War Machines

Bolt Thrower.

At 75 points, this is pricey in comparison to other warmachines, which often deliver more damage. With 2 shots at Blast(D3) and a pretty low Piercing 2, the damage output of this war machine is often small!

However, every Elven army should include some of these. With Ra 4+, these are accurate, shooting targets at long range will be hitting on 5s with 2 shots. And this is one of the most important units to have the "Elite" rule. That re-roll with a good chance of hit means you can rely on these to hit, unlike most other war machines. So generally a couple of bolt throwers should hit something each turn. Another reason these are essential is because the Elven army seriously lacks any piercing, and while the piercing isn't great on these, it's still long range piercing that can be delivered accurately. Targets for your warmachines should therefore be, enemy warmachines. Typically enemy warmachines are random and unpredictable, but will flatten your units if they connect. And since most have Def 4+, your war machines should be hitting them

on 5s, and damaging on 2s. With a low Nerve too, a few well placed hits will break them. Other targets for your Bolt Throwers should be large infantry units, with high defense but low Nerve. Do not waste your Bolt Throwers by firing them into large, low Def Hordes unless you really have no other targets or intend to break that Horde by combining all your firepower.

Dragons Breath.

A much rarer war machine, but at 60 points it's a cheaper alternative. But this is a very defensive unit. With a range of just 12" it often won't see much use, but with a mighty Breath Attack(20) this will burn through most targets that venture too close. Rampaging Hordes of Zombies and PikeMen have all fallen victim to this. Another great use for this is to put off flying heroes, typically a cheap Hero model with the Wings of Honeymaze, flying over your line and attacking your warmachines. Position this so that all your Bolt Throwers are within 12" and at the lose of one of your Bolt Throwers, that flying Hero will suffer a Flame fuelled death from your Dragons Breath, who cares not for Individual Rule modifiers.

So with all of this, where should you start if you are a new General? The 1 Player Battle set is a great place to start. Included is 20 Spears, 20 Bowmen, 10 Scouts and a Bolt Thrower, which have all been covered here. This will come to roughly 500 points, depending on how you equip them. If you are looking to start somewhere, this is a good, cheap way to do it.

In the next article, we will cover more of the units you can choose from, and how to form a decent, well rounded army.▪

By Jonathan Faulkes

By Boris Samec

The Map – Kings of War Scenario

Neil Dixon (Dwarfs) & Alistair Moore aka Platemail (Kingdom of Men)

Here I present a scenario for Kings of War, along with background and brief report of how the scenario played. This scenario is part of a campaign I am undertaking with my opponent Alistair. With a little modification, it should be easy to suit the scenario to any army. Keep an eye on future issues as I report further details of the campaign and reports of future battles.

Scenario Outline

Protected by a small retinue, a courier must make a perilous headlong rush through an enemy occupied valley. Time is of the essence, and the map the courier carries must make it through the valley, no matter what the consequences. Meanwhile the enemy wait, unseen, ready to ambush the threat.

Dermontivich's heart raced as the pounding of drums echoed round the camp. "Ready men, all rise!" said the Sergeant.

Company Commander Pekovich's nightly, intense meetings with his trusted advisors, and soldier gossip had made him expect this moment would come soon. Weeks and months had passed as he had scouted this area. On a hunt the Captain had said, wild

goose chase more like Dermontivich thought. A dirty, unkempt boy stopped at his feet. "Sir, the Captain wants to see you in his tent immediately!"

He finished dressing as he jogged, finishing the buttoning of his jerkin just as the Captain's Guard opened the tent flap. Standing behind a large, wooden, trestle table, the Captain looked up from the parchment he was staring at with a hand held eye glass.

"Arrh, Dermontivich. You are a respected rider, the fastest in my Company," said the Captain.

"Some say so, sir."

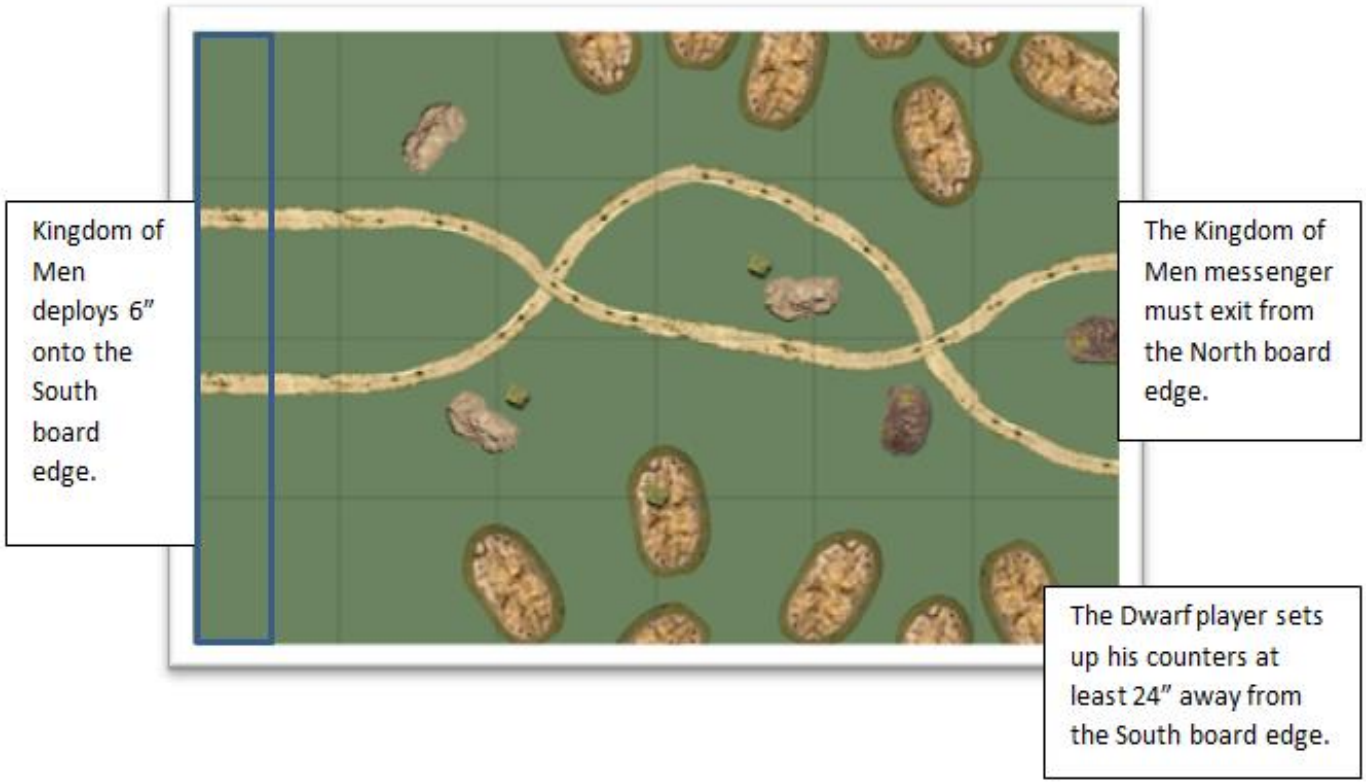
The Captain grunted, folding up the large parchment. He took a burning candle, dripped wax at the fold and pressed the ring on his finger into the wax.

The Captain held out the parchment.

"You will deliver this map to General Renovich. We will protect you through the Dwarf infested Williamshed Valley. There you will leave us."

Demontivich stepped forward and gripped the map. He glanced to the eyes of the Captain, as he tried to pull it from his grip.

"Do not fail me Dermontivich. I do not expect you to stop for anything, even death if you can help it. For all of Nivkh we have sought this! Now, you hold a vital clue to its whereabouts that must not fall into enemy hands. I will see you at Valley End. Ride hard now, and Godspeed!"


Kingdom of Men deploys 6" onto the South board edge.
The Kingdom of Men messenger must exit from the North board edge.
The Dwarf player sets up his counters at least 24" away from the South board edge.

Map Deployment and Setup

By Grant Mahoney

Army Selection

Each army picks 600 points from the following;

Kingdom of Men
0-1 Heroes, Mounted Sergeants, Mounted Scouts, Missile Troops

Dwarfs
0-1 Heroes, Ironwatch, War machines (ignore normal requirements for regiments)

Set up

Use a 6x4 board. The picture below is given as a guide. Two meandering roads run short edge to short edge. The roads are in a valley with hills on either side. Impassable terrain is strewn about the valley floor and on the hills.

The Dwarf player rolls a D6, and adds 6 to the score. The Dwarf player has this many counters available to place on the board. The counters are placed after scenery is set up, anywhere except within 24" of the Kingdom of Men board edge.

The counters are numbered, and are placed numbered side down. The Dwarf player secretly writes which counter represents each unit. The rest of the counters are still placed, but are dummies. The Dwarf player may elect to reveal any of his counters at the start of his turn. The Kingdom of Men continue to move past counters in their turn. They can elect to have the Dwarf player reveal the counter anytime during their move, pausing the movement of the unit, so long as a unit or hero is within 12" of the counter. Revealed units can be attacked as normal.

After the Dwarf player has set up his counters, the Kingdom of Men player then deploys his units within 6" of the south short board edge. Units can elect to move on the board in their first turn, but the courier and at least one unit on each road must be deployed in the board.

Both players then roll a D6. The player with the highest score can then choose to go first or second.

Special rules

The Kingdom of Men army includes a courier. Use a suitable model on horseback as a representative. So long as the courier remains within 6" of any unit or hero from the Kingdom of Men army it cannot be harmed. It is assumed a trooper breaks rank and picks up the map, or the courier's Commander inspires him to not let him suffer from grievous wounds he may have received. If the courier strays outside this range he can be harmed as normal. If he is killed, place a marker at the point where the model was removed. Any Kingdom of Men model or unit which moves over the marker can attempt to pick up the map and carry it to safety. To do this, the unit or hero immediately stops and ends its movement on the marker, and can carry out no further action that turn. In the following Kingdom of Men turn, the unit or hero moves as normal. This unit or hero now effectively counts as the courier, using the profile below and follows all the special rules here.

The courier is unable to attack. When attacked in combat, should he survive he must move away in his own movement phase towards his objective.

<u>Courier profile:</u>
Move 8
Me: -
Ran: -
Att: 0
Defence 3+
Nerve 11/13
Special rules: Individual

Set a chess clock at 30 minutes, giving 15 minutes for each player. The Kingdom of Men player must get the courier off the north board edge within the time limit. If he does not accomplish this, the Dwarf player wins. If the courier dies and the Kingdom of Men player has no surviving troops that can reach the map, the Dwarf player wins. If the Dwarf player runs out of time, they can make no further moves, but the Kingdom of Men player can finish moving their models providing they have time left.

Movement is as normal providing the unit or hero's base is touching the road. Any movement not on the roads counts as

Kingdom of Men deployment

Mounted Scouts know the map is more important than their lives as they throw themselves towards the Dwarf gun line

difficult terrain (double movement required). Charges not on the road can still be made at full movement but count as disrupted.

A brief report of the battle

The Kingdom of Men looked so numerous compared to the paltry Dwarfs, with Mounted Sergeants, Scouts, Missile Troops and even a Captain. I was playing the Dwarfs and got two units of Ironwatch, two Organ Guns and a Cannon. You do not get much for 600 points! I deployed my counters spread out across the valley, Ironwatch blocking the roads and Organ Guns and Cannon off the road ready to pound the enemy as they filed past.

The Dwarfs got the first turn, promptly removing a Mounted Sergeants unit with Cannon fire. The courier kept in the midst of the Kingdom of Men army, staying very close to the Captain.

The Kingdom of Men advanced, using the Mounted Sergeants and Scouts as a screen and charging the Ironwatch. Bloodshed aside, the units were a needless distraction for the Dwarfs, and were designed as cover for the courier.

I picked off units closest to the courier with my shooting, hoping to strand him and take him out. Till the last third of the board, the Kingdom of Men kept as a group, when the courier and Captain broke away from the main army. My last line of defence was an Ironwatch troop and a sole Cannon. All I had to do was kill the Captain protecting the courier and potentially kill the courier the

Screening the courier

The Captain and courier launch a daring dash to escape

following turn. The Kingdom of Men had minutes to spare whilst I was running low. Two shots later and the Captain and courier were still alive. Drat!

Horse panting furiously, Dermontivich could feel the sweat run off its neck. His ears were filled with the pounding of cannons and whistling of crossbow bolts. Guttural cheers came from the Dwarfs and men, selling their lives for his precious map. He moved his hand to his right breast, as he had done a million times, feeling its bulge hidden in his jerkin.

"Even death will never stop me, even death will never stop me," he whispered to himself.

As Dermontivich galloped, he looked left, and then right before spotting the Captain was still alive. The Captain had stayed true to his word, keeping by his side, raising his sword in triumph as he continued to dodge Dwarvern missiles. Riding low, cannons boomed and his horse flinched. The end of the road was in sight and the cannon shots and the smoke of battle gradually grew distant. His horse slowed, and he heard the Captain also, throwing up dust as he reined in his horse beside him. He saw how the Captain's armour was dented and smattered with blood spots from unfelt wounds.

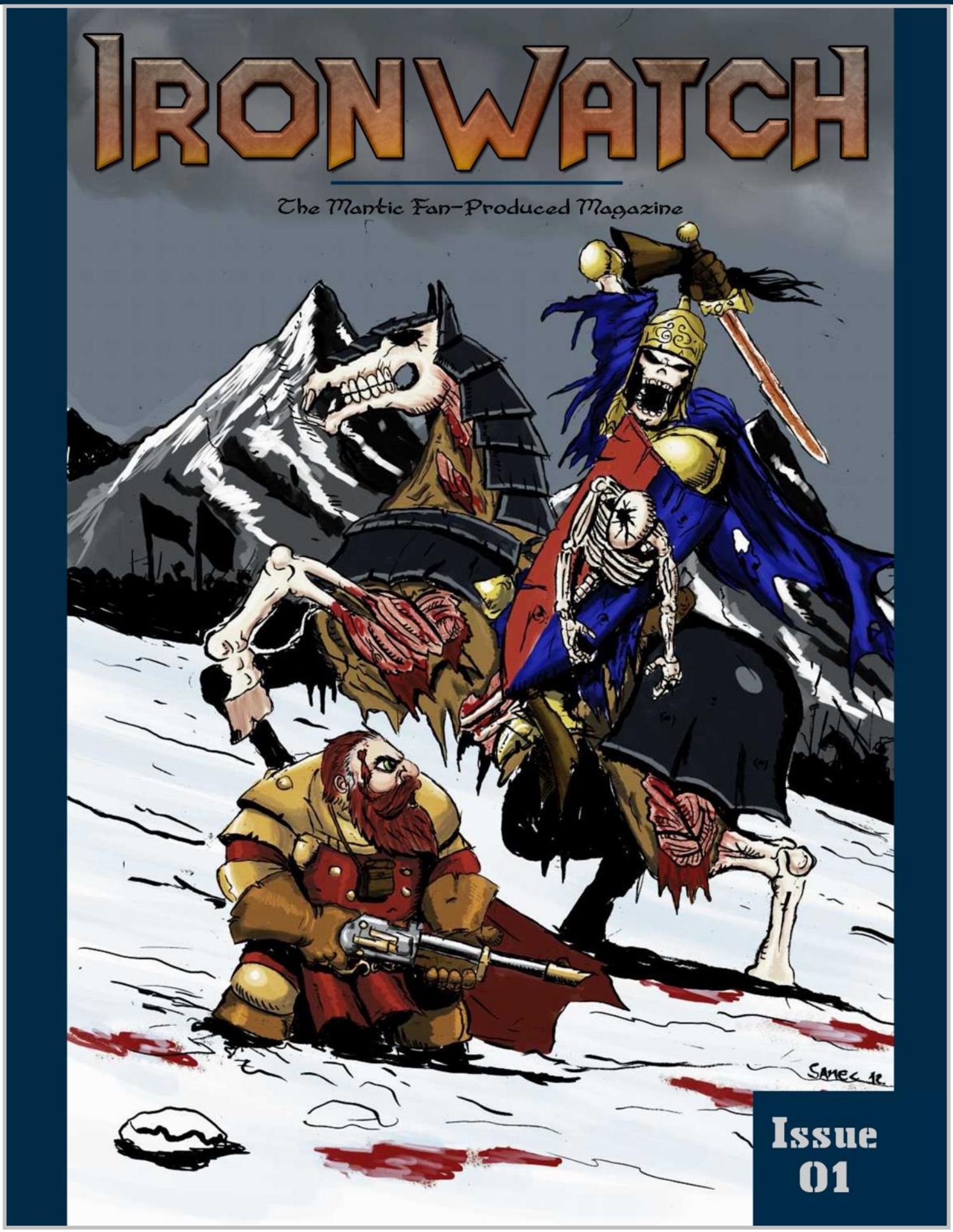
"You did it Dermontivich, the most dangerous part of the journey is over!" The Captain said as he raised his visor.

Dermontivich looked back at the battle and could still hear the shouts of men and the shots of the cannons.

"Many men have sacrificed their lives for this. There are more sacrifices to be made. Ride on to General Renovich! We will continue to hold them off here."

The Captain kicked his protesting horse, and shot off back in the direction he came. Dermontivich continued north, looking back at the diminishing body of the Captain, wondering what was marked on the map in his pocket which was of such high importance.▪

And slip past the Cannon unscathed!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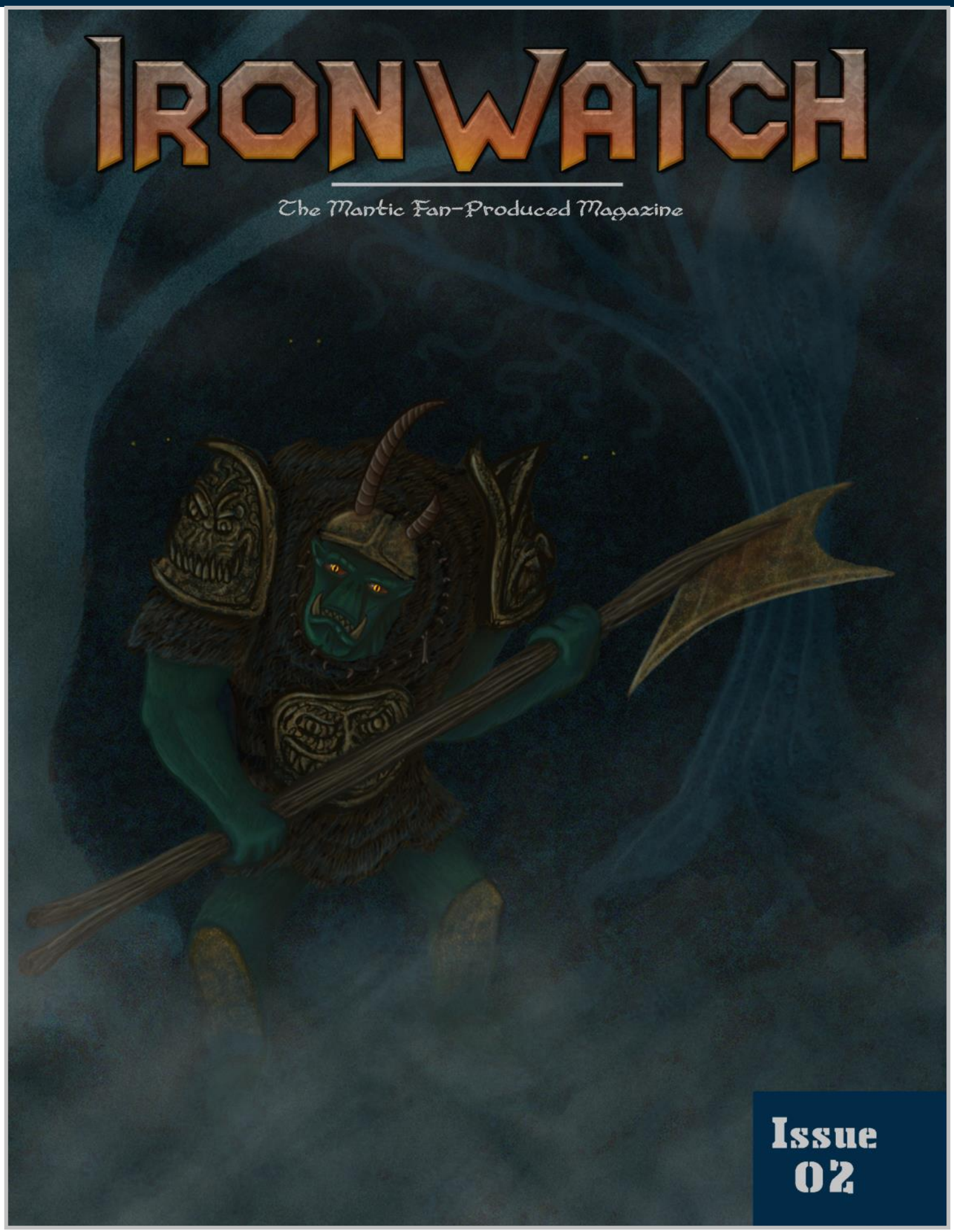
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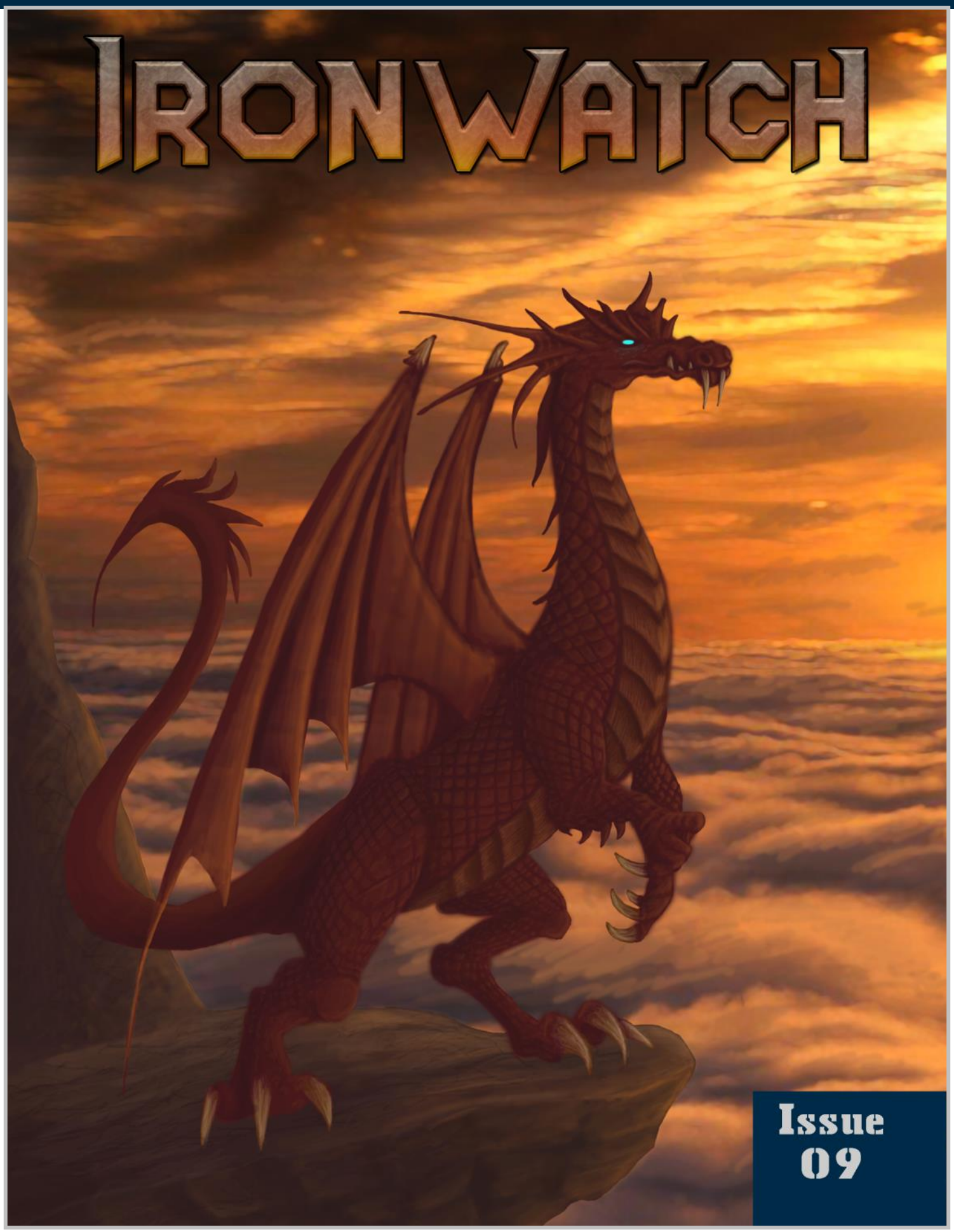
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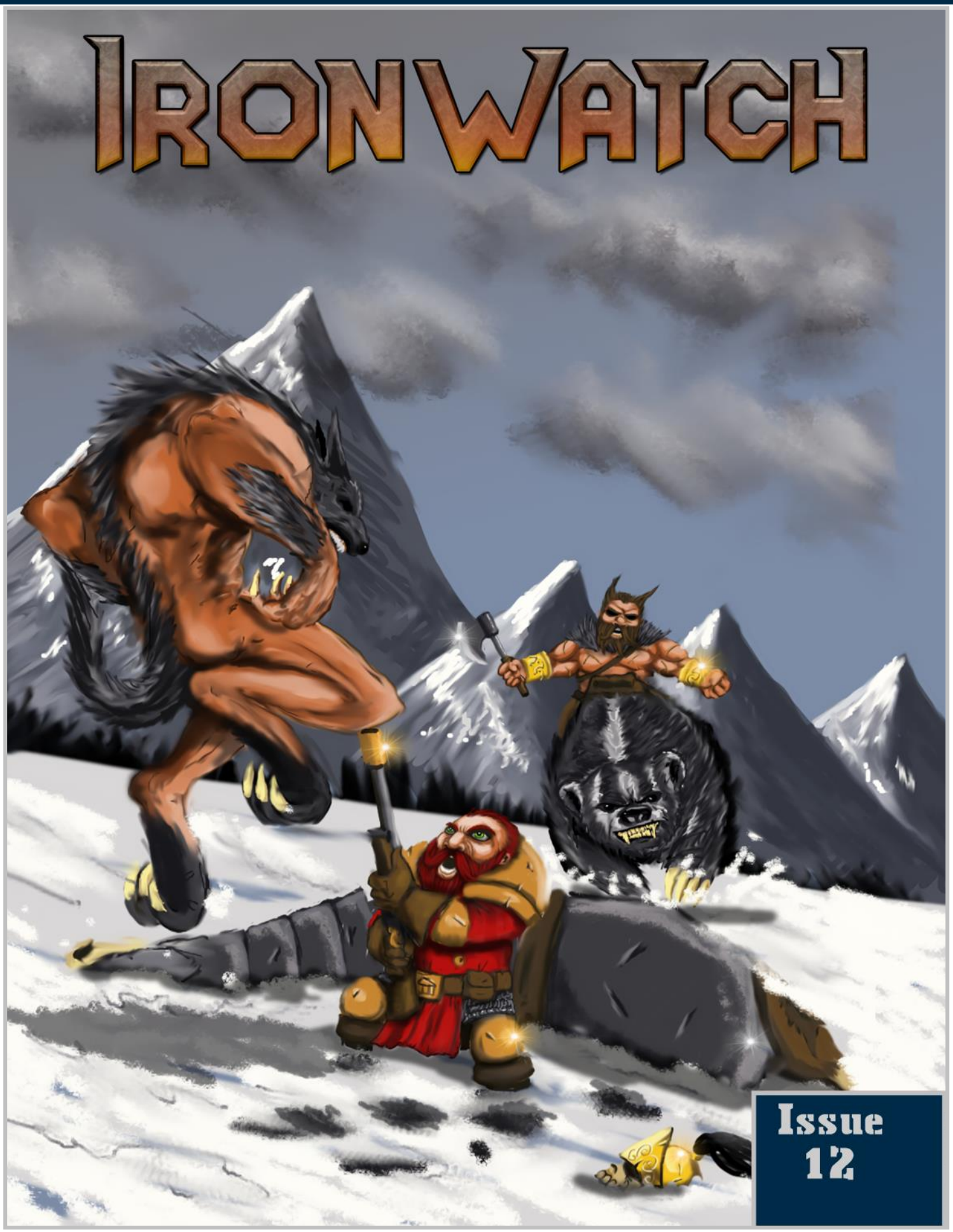
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